

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL
DIVINITY, BOOK II
OF THE ACTS AND WORKS OF GOD

Dr John Gill DD

A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY

DR JOHN GILL

BOOK II

**OF THE WORKS OF GOD
OF THE EXTERNAL WORKS OF GOD**

**PREPARED BY David Clarke FOR PASTORS AND STUDENTS OF CHRIST CENTERED CHURCHES
PHILIPPINES**

Presentation and Dedication

This new edition of Dr. John Gills, “**Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity**”, is presented and dedicated to the students, pastors and teachers of Christ-Centered Church Inc. Ministries, Philippines, under the care of William Ola Poloc, its founder and senior pastor (Bishop) on the, 16th January 2020, by David Clarke, founder of Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Inc.

Brief History of the Baguio Christ-Centered Churches Ministries Inc.

Pstr William O. Poloc Sr. was released from the New Bilibid prison in August 2002, where he graduated with a Degree in Theology, and started prison ministries in his hometown Baguio City, with his wife and the aid of a certain missionary from UK, by name David Clarke, the founder of Trojan Horse International. In December 2002 they were able to baptize 22 inmates in Baguio City Jail, 9 inmates in Benguet Provincial jail, along with William's wife Beth Poloc and Josephine Ortis, along with her daughter Karen Basoon, who had all confessed their faith in the lord Jesus Christ. David Clarke returned to the UK in 2003 after his mission.

Later, God gave them a burden to open a church within the city so as to reach out to their families, relatives and the families of my co inmates who are still incarcerated at the New Bilibid Prison.

By His grace the Baguio Christ-Centered Church Inc. stood up. As years go by God continued to bless the church by drawing more souls into it. He also blessed us with a bible school to train ministers unable to study in an expensive bible schools. Graduates of our school were sent out to reach lost souls and augment Christ Centered mission churches to different places around the archipelago. As a result, by God's grace and providence Christ Centered Churches were established to the different places in the country.

Published by:

Bierton Particular Baptists
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Hampshire
PO143AE
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Our Website:

www.BiertonParticularBaptists.co.uk

ISBN



God's work here in the Northern Philippines bloomed most especially here in the city of Baguio. The Baguio Christ-Centred Church is the mother church of all the Christ Centered Churches in the Philippines namely; The Pilot- Christ-Centred Church, The Kamog Christ-Centred Church, The Christ-Centered-Church Theological School(TULIP), The Christ-Centred Radio Ministry, The Christ-Centred Jail Ministries etc.). We'll,
2

we are truly blessed by these works He has entrusted to us. To God be the glory!

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Personal note from the publisher

It is noted and remarked that this date of publication is the Golden Jubilee ¹(Leviticus 25:8-13 King) of conversion of David Clarke, which took place on, 16th January 1971.

<http://www.Biertonparticularbaptists.co.uk>



David Clarke is the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists who was called by the Lord and sent by church to preach the gospel in 1982. The doctrinal foundation of Trojan Horse Mission are those of the Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of religion.

View the Wikipedia Entry for Bierton and view [None Conformist Place of Worship](#)

Who Is Dr. John Gill

John Gill (23 November 1697 – 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

Pastoral Work

His first pastoral work was as an intern assisting John Davis at Higham Ferrers in 1718 at age 21. He became pastor at the Strict Baptists church at Goat Yard Chapel, Horselydown, Southwark in 1719. His pastorate lasted 51 years. In 1757 his congregation needed larger premises and moved to a Carter Lane, St. Olave's Street, Southwark. This Baptist church was once pastored by Benjamin Keach and would later become the New Park Street Chapel and then the Metropolitan Tabernacle pastored by Charles Spurgeon.

¹ 8 And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

Works

In 1748, Gill was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author. His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1725-8), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points.
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746–8), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748–63) forms his magnum opus
- A Collection of Sermons and Tracts
- A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)
- A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
- A Body of Practical Divinity (1770)

Gill also edited and re-published the works of **Rev. Tobias Crisp, D.D.** (1600-1643).

NOTE:

We have not included the Greek, Hebrew or Latin text in the interest of economy.

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BOOK II

OF THE ACTS AND WORKS OF GOD

Chapter 1

OF THE INTERNAL ACTS AND WORKS OF GOD; AND OF HIS DECREES IN GENERAL

Having considered the nature, perfections, and persons in God, I shall now proceed to treat of his acts and operations; which are such as are worthy of a Being possessed of those perfections which have been described; and so must be worthy of our notice. God is “actus purus et simplicissimus”; he is all act; if one may so say; having nothing passive in him; and therefore must be active and operative; “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work”, (John 5:17) in which words there is a term fixed, unto which God had worked, the then present time Christ spoke them; but none from whence he began to work: he had not only worked in providence till then, since the creation, and not only at the creation, but from all eternity; his active and eternal mind had always been at work; the thoughts of his heart were always employed in devising, forming, and settling things that should be done in time; and as the three divine Persons were taking infinite delight and pleasure in each other, so in the fore views of what would be done by each of them in time, for the setting forth and manifestation of their glory.

The acts and works of God may be distinguished into internal and external. The “external” acts and works of God, are such as are done in time, visible to us, or known by us; as creation, providence, redemption, &c. His “internal” acts and works, which will be first considered, and are what were done in eternity, are commonly distinguished into personal and essential. Personal acts are such as are peculiar to each person, and distinguish the one from the other; and which have been taken notice of already, in treating of the doctrine of the Trinity. “Essential” acts are such as are common to them all; for as they have the same nature and essence, they have the same understanding, will, and affections; and the same acts appropriate to these belong unto them, both with respect to themselves and the creatures they meant to make; that is to say, they mutually know one another, love each other, and will each other’s happiness and glory; and have the same knowledge of, will concerning, and affection for creatures to be brought into being by them; and among these internal acts of the mind of God, are his purposes and decrees; and these are “purposed in himself”, (Eph. 1:9) for what is true of one of his purposes, is true of all; and that there are such in God is certain; and which respect, not only

the affairs of grace, but those of providence; even the whole earth, and all things in it, (Rom. 9:11; Eph. 1:11, 3:11; Isa. 14:24, 27) and which go by various names in scripture; sometimes they are called, “the thoughts of his heart”; these are the deep things of God, which lie in the inmost recesses of his mind; are only known by himself, and searched by his Spirit; as the thoughts of a man can only be known by the spirit of man within him (Ps. 33:11; Jer. 29:11; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11). Sometimes they are called the “counsels” of God, said to be “of old”, ancient ones, even from eternity; and to be “faithfulness and truth”; faithfully and truly performed in time, (Isa. 25:1) and their being so called does not suppose any degree of ignorance, or want of knowledge in God, or as if he was at a loss what to resolve upon; and therefore consulted with himself, or others, what was fittest to be determined on; but because such resolutions, that are taken after mature deliberation and consultation, are generally formed in the wisest manner; and commonly most successful in the execution of them; therefore the purposes of God, being made with the highest wisdom, from thence they have the name of “counsels”. They are sometimes called “decrees”, and so we commonly call them; being the determinations of the mind of God; what he has fixed, settled, and resolved upon, (Dan. 4:17; Zeph. 2:2) and so the “determinate counsel” of God, (Acts 2:23) sometimes they are expressed by “pre-ordination” and predestination; so Christ is said to be “foreordained” before the foundation of the world, (1 Peter 1:20) and men are said to be “predestinated” to the adoption of children, and to an inheritance, (Eph. 1:5, 11) that is, afore appointed thereunto in the decrees of God; and often they are signified by his “will” and “pleasure”; by the “counsel of his will”; and by his “counsel” and “pleasure”, (Rom. 9:19; Eph. 1:11; Isa. 46:10) they containing and expressing his mind and will; what it is his pleasure should be. Now concerning these may be observed,

First, The proof to be given of them, that there are decrees and purposes in God; not merely ideas of things future, but settled determinations concerning them; which may be evinced from the nature and perfections of God. God is a Spirit, uncreated, infinite, operative, and active: he is a pure act, as before observed; and must have been for ever active in himself; his eternal mind must always have been employed, and continually at work; as the mind of man is never without its thoughts, and the understanding has its acts, and the will its volitions; so God never was without the thoughts of his heart, the acts of his understanding, and the volitions

of his will. The “Sovereignty” of God over all, and his “in-dependency”, clearly show, that whatever is done in time, is according to his decrees in eternity; for if anything comes to pass without the will of God, or contrary to it, or what he has not commanded, that is decreed, (Lam. 3:37) how is he a sovereign Being, that does according to his will in heaven and in earth, and works all things after the counsel of his will? (Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11) and if anything is by chance and fortune, or the mere effect of second causes, and of the free will of men, independent of the will of God, and if he works under these, in subserviency to them, and takes his measures of operation from them, then he must be dependent on them; and how then can it be said with truth, that “of him, and through him, and to him, are all things?” (Rom. 11:36). The “immutability” of God requires eternal decrees in him, concerning everything that is in time; for if anything is done in time, that did not fall under his notice and will in eternity, this must be new to him, and produce a change in him; or if an after will in time arises in him, respecting anything he would have done, which he willed not before, this argues a change in him; whereas, in him there is “no variableness, nor shadow of turning”. The knowledge of God, supposes and clearly proves and establishes the decrees of God; he is a “God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed”, (1 Sam. 2:13) he has knowledge of all actions done in time; and such an exact knowledge of them, as if they were weighed by him, and before him; and this knowledge of them is not successive, as they are performed; “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning”, or from eternity, (Acts 15:18) both what he would do himself, and what he wills to be done by others: and this knowledge is founded on his decrees; he knows that such and such things will be, because he has determined they shall be. Once more, the “wisdom” of God makes it necessary that there should be eternal purposes and decrees in him, concerning things future; he is the all-wise and only wise God, and in wisdom makes all his works; which cannot be supposed to be made without previous thoughts and determinations concerning them: what wise man undertakes a building, without first determining what it shall be, of what materials it shall be made, in what form and manner, as well as for what end? And can we imagine that the all-wise God, who builds all things, should go about them without pre concerted measures, and settled determinations concerning them; “Who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working?” (Isa. 28:29).

2. **Secondly**, The extent of the decrees and purposes

of God, deserve notice and consideration: and they reach to all things that come to pass in the world, from the beginning to the end of it. The world, and all things in it, were created by and according to the will and pleasure of God (Rev. 4:11). The heavens, their creation, stability, duration, and passing away, and succeeded by new heavens, are by a decree that cannot pass (Ps. 148:6). The earth, in its different forms, before and after the flood, its continuance, and final destruction, with the day or time of it, are by the word or decree of God (2 Peter 3:5-7, 10). The sea, and the place the receptacle of it, and its boundary, the sand, which its waters cannot pass, are by a perpetual decree (Job 38:10, 11; Prov. 8:29; Jer. 5:21). The rain which is exhausted out of it, has its decree; and there is not a shower falls but by the will of God; whether it be given as a mercy, to make fruitful seasons, or whether it be withheld, or poured down in too great plenty, in a way of judgment; it is all according to the word, will, and decree of God (Job 28:26; Amos 4:7, 8, 5:8). The peopling of the world; the distinction of nations; the rise, progress, and ruin of states, kingdoms, and empires, are all according to the decrees of God; even every petty state and kingdom, as well as the four grand monarchies; the destruction of the first of which, the Babylonian monarchy, as it was by the decree of the Watchers, and by the demand of the Holy Ones; that is, by the decree of the most High; so the origin of it, and its rise to all its glory and grandeur; and the same is true of all the rest (see Deut. 32:8; Dan. 2:38-44, 4:17, 20). Particularly, the people of Israel, a select and distinguished people from all others; their original from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; their servitude in a land not theirs, for four hundred years; their settlement in the land of Canaan; their government under judges and kings; and their several captivities, were all determined; as well as their last destruction, when the desolations determined, were poured upon the desolate; and so is their future conversion and restoration (Gen. 15:14; Ex. 15:17; Dan. 9:26, 27; Rom. 11:25, 26). The church of God, in its different states, under the legal dispensation; the time appointed of the Father, when it was under tutors and governors, (Gal. 4:1, 2) and under the gospel dispensation, the world to come, the time of reformation, when all things became new; the former covenant waxed old, and vanished away, and the ordinances of it, and new ones took place; and which continues to be the accepted time and day of salvation; all are by divine appointment. The persecutions and sufferings of the church of Christ under the ten Roman emperors, signified by ten days, (Rev. 2:10) and under

Rome papal, for a time, and times, and half a time; even forty two months, or one thousand, two hundred and sixty days or years; the time of the church's being in the wilderness, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of the reign of antichrist, are all fixed by the decree of God; and when the time is up, the Angel will swear by the living God, that time shall be no longer; that is, antichristian time, (Rev. 10:6, 11:2, 3, 12:14, 13:5) as well as the glory of the church in the latter day; for which there is a set time; and which God will hasten, in his own time; when there will be great light and prosperity, numerous conversions, a great spread of the gospel, and an enlargement of the interest of Christ, and much purity and righteousness (Ps. 102:13; Isa. 60:1-22). In short, everything respecting all the individuals of the world, that have been, are, or shall be, all correspond with the decrees of God, and are according to them; mens coming into the world, the time of it, and all circumstances attending it; all events and occurrences they meet with, throughout the whole time of life; their places of habitation, their stations, calling, and employment; their circumstances of riches and poverty, of health and sickness, adversity and prosperity; their time of going out of the world, with everything attending that; all are according to the determinate counsel and will of God, (Eccl. 3:1, 2, 7:14; Acts 17:26; Job 14:5) and particularly, all that relate to the people of God, as well their spiritual and eternal, as temporal concerns; their election of God, their redemption by Christ, their effectual calling, which is according to the purpose of God; the time, manner, and means of it; all their changes in life; their afflictions and distresses, deliverances, and salvations from temptation and trouble; yea, even the final state and condition of good men and bad men, is settled and determined: but this will be more particularly considered under the special decrees of God, respecting rational creatures. All that Christ was to be, do, and suffer for his people, are what the hand and counsel of God before determined; his incarnation, the time of his coming into the world; all that he met with, from the hand of God, from men and devils, while in it; his sufferings and death, and all circumstances attending the same (Gal. 4:4; Acts 4:28, 2:23; Luke 22:22, 37). In a word, everything that comes to pass in this world, from the beginning to the end of it, is pre-ordained; everything, good and bad; good by his effective decrees; that is, such by which he determines what he will do himself, or shall be done by others; and evil things, by his permissive decrees, by which he suffers things to be done; and which he overrules

for his own glory; yea, things contingent, which, with respect to second causes, may seem to be, or not be, as the free actions of men; such as the prophesies, founded on decrees, concerning the names of Josiah and Cyrus, and of actions being performed by them of their own free will, many hundreds of years before they were born; nay, even things of the least importance, as well as the greatest; the hairs of mens heads are numbered; two sparrows, not worth more than a farthing, and yet fall not to the ground, without the knowledge, will, and purpose of God (Matthew 10:29, 30).

Thirdly, The properties of the purposes and decrees of God, may next be considered.

1. As they are internal acts, they are immanent ones; they are in God, and remain and abide in him; and while they are so, they put nothing into actual being, they are concerned about, until they bring forth, or are brought forth into execution: then they pass upon their respective objects, terminate on them, and issue in actual operation; and then they are called "transient" acts; and till then they are secrets in God's breast, and are unknown to men.

2. They are eternal; as God himself is eternal, so are they; for, as some divines express it, God's decrees are himself decreeing, and therefore if he is from everlasting to everlasting, they are so likewise; if the knowledge of God, respecting all his works, is from the beginning, or from eternity, which arises from his decrees, then they themselves must be from eternity; and if the particular decree of election was before the foundation of the world, as it was, (Eph. 1:4) the same must be true of all the decrees of God, which are all of a date; for no new will, nor new act of the will of God, arise in him in time.

3. The decrees of God are most free; they are the free acts of his will, without any force or compulsion, and are not influenced by any motive from without himself; as "he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy", and exercises it freely, and on whom he pleases; so he freely decreed to have mercy as he pleased; as he hides the things of the gospel from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes, as seems good in his sight; he freely determined so to do: indeed, having made those decrees, there is a necessity of the performance of them; but the making of them was quite free.

4. They are most wise decrees; as God is a wise Being, and does all his works in wisdom, so his decrees are laid in the deepest wisdom; which, though unsearchable by us, and may be unaccountable to us; yet there is, as the apostle expresses it, speaking of them, "a depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God in

them” (Rom. 11:33).

5. They are immutable and unalterable; they are the mountains of brass, out of which come forth the horses and chariots, the executioners of divine providence; signified by mountains, for their immovableness, and by mountains of brass, for their greater stability and firmness (Zech. 6:1-8). The decrees of the Medes and Persians, when signed and sealed, were not to be changed or altered: but these are more unchangeable and unalterable than they were: we read of the immutability of the counsel of God, (Heb. 6:17) his purposes and decrees, which, like himself, are the same today, yesterday, and for ever; without any variableness, or shadow of turning.

6. The decrees of God are always effectual; they cannot be frustrated or disannulled, or become of no effect; “For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?” (Isa. 14:27). The purposes of men are often frustrated, through want of foresight, not being able to foresee what may turn up, which may hinder the execution of their designs; but no unforeseen accident can arise to put any stop in the way of executing the decrees of God; since all things are at once in his eternal view, who sees the end from the beginning: men sometimes fail of bringing their resolutions into execution, for want of power: but God is omnipotent, and is able to do, and therefore does whatever he pleases; he is in one mind, and none can turn him; and what he desires, he does; his counsel stands, and he does all his pleasure; and the thoughts of his heart are to all generations. To say no more; the end of the decrees of God is his own glory; he has “made”, that is, appointed “all things for himself”, for the glorifying his perfections, (Prov. 16:4) there may be, and are, inferior ends, as the good of his creatures, &c. But his glory is the supreme end, and all others are subordinate to it.

Chapter 2

OF THE SPECIAL DECREES OF GOD, RELATING TO RATIONAL CREATURES, ANGELS, AND MEN; AND PARTICULARLY OF ELECTION.

The special decrees of God respecting rational creatures, commonly go under the name of “predestination”; though this sometimes is taken in a large sense, to express everything that God has predetermined; and so it takes in all that has been observed in the preceding chapter; which some call eternal providence, of which, temporary providence is

the execution; for with God there is not only a provision of things future, but a provision for the certain bringing them to pass; and the counsel and will of God is the source and spring of all things, and the rule and measure according to which he works, (Eph. 1:11) but predestination is usually considered as consisting of two parts, and including the two branches of election and reprobation, both with respect to angels and men; for each of these have place in both. Angels; some of them are called “elect” angels, (1 Tim. 5:21) others are said to be “reserved in chains”, in the chains of God’s purposes and providence, “unto the judgment” of the great day (2 Peter 2:4). Men; some of them are vessels of mercy, afore prepared for glory; others vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction; some are the election, or the elect persons, that obtain righteousness, life, and salvation; and others are the rest that are left in, and given up to blindness (Rom. 9:22, 23, 11:7). Though sometimes predestination only respects that branch of it called election, and the predestinated signify only the elect; for who else are called, justified, and glorified, enjoy adoption and the heavenly inheritance? Not, surely, the non-elect (Rom. 8:29, 30; Eph. 1:5,11). This branch of predestination, election, must be considered first; I shall begin with,

I. The election of angels; of this the scriptures speak but sparingly, and therefore the less need to be said concerning it: that there are some angels that are elect is certain, from the proof already given: there is a similarity between their election and the election of men; though in some things there appears a little difference.

1. The election of angels, as well as of men, is of God; he is the efficient cause of it is God that has chosen them, and distinguished them from others, and therefore they are called the “angels of God”, (Luke 12:8, 9) not merely because they are his creatures, so are the evil angels; but because they are his chosen, his favourites, and appointed to be happy with him to all eternity.

2. Their election, as that of men, lies in a distinction and separation from the rest of their species; they are not only distinguished from them by their characters, the one being holy angels, the others the angels that sinned; but by their state and condition, the one being preserved from apostasy, and continued in their first estate; the other left to fall into sin, and from their former state, and reserved unto judgment.

3. In their election they were considered as on an equal footing with others not elected, as men are; as men are considered, when chosen, as in the pure mass, having done neither good nor evil, so were angels; this

must be out of all question, with respect to them, since the elect angels never fell, never were in any corrupt state, and could not be so considered: besides, their preservation from apostasy, and their confirmation, by grace, in the state in which they were created, are in consequence of their election; and therefore must be previous to the fall of the rest, who, with thine, must be considered in the pure mass of creature-ship; wherefore the choice of the one, and the leaving of the other, must be entirely owing to the sovereign will of God.

4. Their election, though it is not said to be made in Christ, as the election of men; nor could it be made in him, considered as Mediator; since they having never sinned against God, and offended him, they needed him not to mediate between God and them, and to make peace and reconciliation; yet they might be chosen in him, as they seem to be, as an Head of conservation; as an Head both of eminence to rule over them, protect and preserve them in their state; and of influence, to communicate grace and strength to them; to confirm them in their state in which they are; for Christ is “the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10).

5. Though the angels are not chosen to salvation as men are, as that signifies a deliverance from sin and misery: seeing they never sinned, and so were never in a miserable condition, and needed no Saviour and Redeemer; yet they are chosen to happiness, to communion with God now, whose face they ever behold; and to a confirmed state of holiness and impeccability, and to the enjoyment of God, and the society of elect men to all eternity.

II The election of men to grace and glory, is next to be considered; and it may be proper in the first place to take some notice of the election of Christ, as man and mediator; who is God’s first and chief elect; and is, by way of eminency, called his elect; “Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth”, (Isa. 42:1) and often-times the chosen of God (Ps. 89:3; Luke 23:35; 1 Peter 2:4). Which character not only denotes his choiceness and excellency, and the high esteem he is in with God; who, though disallowed, disesteemed, and rejected by men, is chosen of God, and precious; but either,

1. It respects the choice of the human nature of Christ to the grace of union with him as the Son of God. God prepared a body, or an human nature for him, in his eternal purposes and decrees; in the book of which all the members thereof were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when, as yet, before there were none of them (Heb. 10:5; Ps. 139:16). Among all the

individuals of human nature, which rose up in the divine mind, to be brought into being by him, this was singled out from among them, and appointed to union with the second Person in the Godhead; this was sanctified, and set apart, and sent into the world; in which Joseph was a type of it, who was separated from his brethren: and hence this human nature of Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost above his fellows, and hail the gifts and graces of the Spirit without measure; and was raised to such honour and dignity, as none of the angels ever were, or will be (Heb. 1:13).

2. The character of elect, as given to Christ, respects the choice of him to his office as Mediator, in which he was set up, and with which he was invested, and had the glory of it before the world began. He was first chosen and set up as an Head; and then his people were chosen, as members of him; he was chosen to be the Saviour of the body, the church; as they are appointed to salvation by him, he is appointed to be the Saviour of them; this is meant by laying help on one that is mighty; and as their salvation is through his sufferings and death, he was foreordained, before the foundation of the world, to be the slain Lamb; through whose precious blood their redemption would be obtained; he was set forth, in the eternal decree and purpose of God, to be the propitiation for sin, to make atonement and satisfaction for it, and procure the pardon of it (1 Peter 1:18-20; Rom. 3:25). Christ is appointed to be the judge of quick and dead; as well as a day is appointed in which God will judge the world in righteousness, by the man Christ Jesus, whom he has ordained for that purpose, (Acts 10:42, 17:31). But what will now be chiefly attended to, and what the scriptures speak so largely of, is the election of men in Christ unto eternal life.

Some are of opinion that this doctrine of election, admitting it to be true, should not be published, neither preached from the pulpit, nor handled in schools and academies, nor treated of in the writings of men; the reasons they give, are because it is a secret, and secret things belong to God; and because it tends to fill men’s minds with doubts about their salvation, and to bring them into distress, and even into despair; and because some may make a bad use of it, to indulge themselves in a sinful course of life, and argue, that if they are elected they shall be saved, let them live as they may; and so it opens a door to all licentiousness: but these reasons are frivolous and groundless; the doctrine of election is no secret, it is clearly and fully revealed, and written as with a sunbeam in the sacred scriptures; it is true indeed, it cannot be said of particular persons, that such a man is

elected, and such a man is reprobated; and especially when both appear to be in a state of unregeneracy; yet when men, in a judgment of charity, may be hoped to be called by grace, they may be concluded to be the elect of God, though it cannot be said with precision; and on the other hand, there may be black marks of reprobation on some men, or at least things have such a very dark aspect on them, that we are apt to say, when we hear a man cursing and swearing, and see him in all excess of wickedness with boldness and impudence, what a reprobate creature is this; though indeed no man, be he ever so vile, is out of the reach of powerful and efficacious grace; and therefore it cannot be absolutely said that he is rejected of God: and whereas there may be only the appearance of grace, and not the truth of it, in such that profess to have it cannot be said with certainty that such an one is an elect person, yet in charity it may be so concluded: however, a truly gracious man may know for himself his “election of God”, as the apostle affirms; and that in this way, the “gospel” being “come” to him, “not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost”, (1 Thess. 1:4, 5) who by means of it has begun, and will carry on and perform the work of grace in him; wherefore such persons will not be filled with doubts and fears about their salvation, nor be led into distress and despair through the doctrine of election; nor need any be distressed about it that are inquiring the way of salvation, or have any knowledge of it; for the first question to be put to a man by himself, is not, am I elected; but, am I born again? Am I a new creature? Am I called by the grace of God, and truly converted? If a man can arrive to satisfaction in this matter, he can have no doubt about his election; that then is a clear case and out of all question. The doctrine of regeneration, which asserts that a man must be born again, or he cannot see and enter into the kingdom of heaven, may as well be objected to, as that of election; since it is as difficult to come to satisfaction about a man’s regeneration, as about his election; and when once the one is a clear case, the other must be likewise; and when it is, what thankfulness and joy does it produce! And if the apostle thought himself bound to give thanks to God for his choice of the Thessalonians to salvation; how much more reason had he to bless the God and Father of Christ for his own election, as he does (2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 1:3, 4). With what exultation and triumph may a believer in Christ take up those words of the apostle, and use them with application to himself, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” (Rom. 8:33) yea our Lord Jesus Christ exhorts his disciples, rather

to rejoice that their names were written in heaven, than that the spirits were subject to them, or that they were possessed of extraordinary gifts, as to cast out devils. With great truth and propriety it is expressed in the seventeenth article of the church of England, that the consideration of this doctrine is “full of sweet, pleasant” and “unspeakable comfort” to “godly” persons: and as for the charge of licentiousness, what is there but what a wicked man may abuse to encourage himself in sin? As even the patience and long-suffering of God; ungodly men may turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, and every doctrine of it; and so this, contrary to its nature, use, and tendency. Strange! That this doctrine should of itself lead to licentiousness, when the thing itself, contained in it, is the source of all holiness; men are chosen according to this doctrine to be holy; they are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, which is secured by this decree as certainly as salvation itself; wherefore those reasons are not sufficient to intimidate and deter us from receiving this doctrine, professing and publishing it; and the rather, since it is the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, frequently suggested and declared by them; what means else when our Lord speaks of the elect of God, for whose sake the days of tribulation should be shortened; and that it was impossible the elect should be deceived; and that God will avenge his own elect? (Matthew 24:22, 24; Luke 18:7) how clearly and fully does the apostle Paul enlarge on this doctrine of election in Romans chapter nine, eleven, Ephesians chapter one, second Thessalonians chapter two, and in other places! And since it is so plentifully declared in the Bible, and is a part of scripture given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, and is written for our learning, to teach us humility, to depress the pride of man, and to magnify the sovereign grace of God in his salvation; we need not be ashamed of it, nor ought we to conceal it; and the apostle exhorts to make our “election” as well as calling “sure”, (2 Peter 1:10) but how should men do this, if they are not taught the doctrine of it; led into an acquaintance with it; instructed into the truth, nature, and use of it, and the way and means whereby it is to be made sure? I proceed then,

First, To observe the phrases by which it is expressed in scripture, whereby may be learnt what is the true meaning of the words “election” and “elect”, as used in scripture with respect to this doctrine. It is expressed by being ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48). As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed; by which ordination is meant no other than the predestination, choice, and appointment of men to everlasting life and

salvation by Jesus Christ; and from whence it appears that this is of particular persons, of some and not all, though many; that it is not to temporary privileges and enjoyments, but to grace and glory; and that faith is not the cause, but the sure and certain fruit and effect of it; and that both eternal life through Christ, and believing in him, are infallibly secured by this act of grace. Some, in order to evade the force and evidence of these words in favour of election, would have them rendered, “as many as were disposed for eternal life, believed”; but this is not agreeable to the use of the word throughout the book of the Acts by the divine historian, where it always signifies determination and appointment, and not disposition; and so by our translators it is rendered “determined” in Acts 15:2 and “appointed” in Acts 22:10, 28:23 and here “preordained” in the Vulgate Latin version, and by Arias Montanus; and besides, there are no good dispositions for eternal life in men before faith; whatsoever is not of faith, is sin; and men, in a state of unbelief and unregeneracy, are foolish and disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures; living in malice, hateful, and hating one another; without hope, and without God in the world; and injurious to good men, (Rom. 14:23; Titus 3:3; Eph. 2:12; 1 Tim. 1:13) and admitting there may be what may be called dispositions for eternal life; let a desire of it, and seeking for it, be accounted such; this may be where faith in Christ does not follow; as in the young man, who asked what he must do to obtain it; and yet, when instructed by Christ, was so far from receiving his instructions, and believing him, that he turned his back on him, and went away from him sorrowful, (Matthew 19:16, 22). Let an attentive hearing of the word be reckoned a good disposition for eternal life; this was found in many of Christ’s hearers, and yet they believed not the report he made, of which he complains; and it is highly probable, that many of those attentive hearers of him, were, in a few days, among those that cried, Crucify him, crucify him, (Luke 19:48, 23:18, 21; Isa. 53:1) and after all, one would think that the Jews, who were externally religious, and were expecting the Messiah; and especially the devout and honourable women, were more disposed for eternal life, than the ignorant and idolatrous Gentiles; and yet the latter rejoiced at hearing the word, glorified it, and believed; when the former did not, but persecuted the preachers of it: from whence it follows, that the faith of the believing Gentiles did not spring from previous dispositions to eternal life; but was the fruit and effect of divine ordination.

This act of God is also expressed by the “names” of

persons being “written in heaven”, and in the “book of life”, called, “the Lamb’s book of life”; because his name stands first in it, was present at the writing of it, and is concerned in that eternal life which it has respect unto, (Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:22; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8). All which shows that it is an act of God in heaven, and respects the happiness of men there; is of particular persons, whose names are in a special manner known of God, and as distinct from others; and is sure and certain, and will abide. But the more common phrases used concerning it, are those of being “chosen” and “elected”; hence the objects of it are called God’s elect, and the election; that is, persons elected, (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 8:33 11:7) which clearly imply, that only some, and not all men, are the objects of it; “I speak not of you all”, says Christ; “I know whom I have chosen”, (John 13:18) not all, but some of you; where all are taken, whether persons or things, no choice is made; if some are chosen, others are not, but left; and in this case the number chosen is but few; “Many are called, but few chosen”, (Matthew 20:16) hence those that are chosen, are called “a remnant; according to the election of grace”; and those that are not chosen, the rest that are left (Rom. 11:5, 7). Wherefore the election treated of is not,

1. An election of a nation to some external privileges, as the people of Israel, who were chosen of God to be a special people, above all people on the face of the earth; not for their quantity or quality, their number or their goodness; but because such was the pleasure of God: but this choice of them as a nation, was only to some outward benefits and blessings; as, besides the good land of Canaan, the word, and worship, and ordinances of God, with others, mentioned in (Rom. 9:4, 5) but in the same context it is observed, that they were not all Israel, or God’s elect, redeemed and called people, in the most special sense; nor all children of God by adopting grace; nor were all predestinated to the adoption of children by Christ: it was only a remnant of them that were of this sort, which should be eternally saved; and whom, if God had not reserved, they had been as Sodom and Gomorrah (Rom. 9:6-8, 27, 29). And so this nation of ours is selected and distinguished from many others, by various blessings of goodness, and particularly by having the means of grace; yet all the individuals of it cannot be thought to be the objects of election to special grace, and eternal glory;

2. Nor of an election to offices; as the sons of the house of Aaron were chosen to minister, in the office of priests, to the Lord; and as Saul was chosen to be king over Israel; and the twelve were chosen to be the

apostles of Christ; for there were many in the priestly office very bad men; and Saul behaved so ill, as to be rejected of God from being king, that is, from the kingdom being continued in his family; and though Christ chose twelve to be his apostles, one of them was a devil: so that though those were chosen to offices, and even to the highest offices in the church and state, yet not to eternal life.

3. Nor of an election of whole bodies and communities of men, under the character of churches, to the enjoyment of the means of grace: Ephesians 1:4 is no instance of this. It is not certain the apostle wrote that epistle to the Ephesians, as to a church, but to some there described, as saints and faithful in Christ Jesus; and it is quite certain, that those who he says were “chosen in Christ”, were not the Ephesians only, but others also; the apostle, and others, who were not members of that church, yet shared in that grace, and other blessings after-mentioned, and were they that first trusted in Christ; and though the Ephesians may be included, yet it is not said of them as a church; besides, the phrase of being “chosen in Christ”, is sometimes used of a single person, and so is not appropriate to communities and churches (Rom. 16:13). To all which may be added, that those said to be chosen in Christ, are not said to be chosen as a church, or to be one, or to church privileges; but to holiness here, and to a blameless state, or a state of perfection hereafter; even to grace and glory. Nor is the character of “elect”, given to the Colossians, (Col. 3:12) given to them as a church; for the same may be observed of them as of the Ephesians, that they are not wrote to as a church; but described by the same epithets as they are; and if they were, this might be said of them in a judgment of charity, since they all of them professed faith in Christ; and the greater part of them, doubtless, in reality were possessed of it, as a fruit and effect, and so an evidence of their election; by which the apostle enforces their mutual duties to one another. And in like manner the Thessalonians are said to be chosen of God, and to know their election of God, since the gospel was come to them, attended with the power and Spirit of God, (1 Thess. 1:4, 5; 2 Thess. 2:13) and all of them had made a profession of Christ, and therefore it might be charitably hoped they were the elect of God; not chosen merely to outward means; but, as it is said, to salvation by Christ, and to the obtaining of his glory. And when the apostle Peter speaks of some he writes to as elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, and as a chosen generation, (1 Peter 1:2, 2:9) he does not write to them, and speak of them, as a church; for he writes

to strangers, scattered abroad in several countries; nor as chosen barely to the means of grace and outward privileges, but to grace and glory: since they are said to be chosen “through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus”.

4. Nor is this act of election under consideration, to be understood of the effectual calling of particular persons; though that is sometimes expressed by choosing men out of the world; when they are separated and distinguished from the men of it; and by choosing, that is, calling the foolish things of the world, and by choosing the poor of it, who become rich in faith, and appear to be heirs of the kingdom, (John 15:19; 1 Cor. 1:26, 27; James 2:5) the reason of which is, because calling is a certain fruit and effect of election, and is a sure and certain evidence of it; “For whom” God did “predestinate, them he also called” (Rom. 8:30). But then election and calling differ, as the cause and the effect, the tree and its fruit, a thing and the evidence of it. But, 2ble. This is to be understood of the choice of certain persons by God, from all eternity, to grace and glory; it is an act by which men are chosen of God’s good will and pleasure, before, the world was, to holiness and happiness, to salvation by Christ, to partake of his glory, and to enjoy eternal life, as the free gift of God through him (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Acts 13:48). And this is the first and foundation blessing; according to which all spiritual blessings are dispensed; and is, by the apostle, set at the front of them all; and is the first link in the golden chain of man’s salvation (Eph. 1:3, 4; Rom. 8:30).

Secondly, The next thing to be considered is, by whom election is made, and in whom it is made: it is made by God, and it is made in Christ.

1. It is made by God, as the efficient cause of it; God, who is a sovereign Being, who does and may do whatever he pleases in heaven and in earth, among angels and men; and has a right to do what he will with his own; as with his own things, temporal and spiritual blessings; so with his own creatures. Shall he be denied that which every man thinks he has a right unto and does? Do not kings choose their own ministers; masters their servants; and every man his own favourites, friends, and companions? And may not God choose whom he pleases to communion with him, both here and hereafter; or to grace and glory? He does this, and therefore it is called “election of God”; of which God is the efficient cause, (1 Thess. 1:4) and the persons chosen are called God’s elect (Rom. 8:33; Luke 18:7). This act is sometimes, and for the most part, ascribed to God the Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;

as he is said to bless men with spiritual blessings, so to choose them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, (Eph. 1:3, 4) and the persons chosen are said to be “elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and, sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”, (1 Peter 1:2) where the Person that chooses is not only described as the Father, but is distinguished from the Spirit, through whose sanctification, and from Jesus Christ, to whose obedience, and the sprinkling of whose blood, men are chosen by him. Sometimes it is ascribed to Christ, and he takes it to himself, “I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen”, (John 13:18) this cannot be understood of Christ’s choosing his disciples to the office or apostleship, for all the twelve were chosen to that; but of his choosing them to eternal life; and this is what he could not say of them all, for one of them was the son of perdition; and hence the elect are called Christ’s elect; not only because chosen in him, and given to him, but because chosen by him; He (the Son of man) “shall send his angels and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds” (Matthew 24:30, 31). Nor is the blessed Spirit to be excluded; for since he has a place in the decree of the means, in order that the end may be attained, and has so much to do in the blessings, gifts, and operations of grace, leading on to the execution of the decree; he must have a concern with the Father and the Son in the act itself, as the efficient cause of it. And this now being the act of God, it is for ever; for whatever God does in a way of special grace, it is for ever; it is unchangeable and irrevocable; men may choose some to be their favourites and friends for a while, and then alter their minds, and choose others in their room; but God never acts such a part, he is in one mind, and none can turn him; his purpose, according to election, or with respect to that, stands sure, firm, and unalterable.

2. This act is made in Christ, “according as he hath chosen us in him” (Eph. 1:4). Election does not find men in Christ, but puts them there; it gives them a being in him, and union to him; which is the foundation of their open being in Christ at conversion, which is the manifestation and evidence of this; “If any man be in Christ”, even in the secret way, by electing grace, “he is a new creature”, sooner or later; which is an evidence of it; for when he becomes a new creature, this shows him to have been in Christ before, from whence this grace proceeds; but these two, an open and secret being in Christ, differ in this, that the one is in time, and but a little while ago, the other from eternity; the one is the evidence of the other; “I knew a man in Christ

above fourteen years ago”, says the apostle, (2 Cor. 12:2) meaning himself; who was, about that time, and not before, called, converted, and become a believer in Christ, and so had open being in Christ; and, in this sense, one saint may be in Christ before another; “Salute Andronicus and Junia who also were in Christ before me”, says the same apostle, (Rom. 16:7) they being called and converted before he was; but with respect to electing grace, one is not before another, the whole body of the elect being chosen together in Christ; which is the sense of the text in Ephesians: and which is not to be understood of being chosen for the sake of him; for though they are predestinated to be conformed to his image, that he may be the firstborn among many brethren, and in all things have the pre-eminence; and unto salvation by him, that he may have the glory of it; and to the obtaining of his glory, partake of it, and have communion with him for evermore, that he may have praise from them to all eternity: yet not his merits, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, not his obedience, sufferings, and death, are the cause of election; these are the meritorious cause of redemption, forgiveness of sin, and justification, and salvation; not of election: the reasons why men are elected, are not because Christ has shed his blood, died for them, redeemed and saved them; but Christ has done all this for them because they are elect; “I lay down my life for the sheep”, says Christ, (John 10:15) sheep and elect are terms convertible, and signify the same persons, even such before they are called and converted; as appears from the following verse: now it is not Christ’s laying down his life for them makes them sheep, and elect; they are so previous to that; but because they are sheep, and chosen ones in Christ, and given him by his Father, therefore he laid down his life for them. Christ himself is the object of election; he is styled God’s elect; and is said to be foreordained, before the foundation of the world, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of his people (Isa. 42:1; 1 Peter 1:20). Now, though as a divine Person, he is, with his Father, the efficient cause of election; yet, as Mediator, he is the means, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, of executing that decree: men are chosen in him as their Head, and they as members of him; not one before another; he and they are chosen together in the same decree; they are given to him in it, and he to them; they are put into his hands, and preserved in him; and hence have a secret being in him, and union to him; hence they partake of all grace and spiritual blessings; they are first “of God in Christ” by electing grace, and then he is made everything to them; and they receive

everything from him they want (1 Cor. 1:30).

Thirdly, The objects of election are to be next inquired after, who are men; for with such only is now our concern; and these not as under such and such characters, as called, converted, believers in Christ, holy and good men, and persevering in faith and holiness unto the end; for they are not elected because they are called, converted, &c. But because they are elected they become all this; and if they are not elected, especially until they have persevered unto the end, I can see no need of their being elected at all; for when they have persevered unto the end, they are immediately in heaven, in the enjoyment of eternal life, and can have no need to be chose to it: and all these characters put together, only amount to such a proposition, that he that believes, and endures to the end, shall be saved. But God does not choose propositions, but persons; not characters, but men, nakedly and abstractly considered; and these not all men, but some, as the nature of election, and the very sense of the word suggests: as in the effectual calling, the fruit and evidence of it, men are taken out of the world, and separated from the men among whom they have had their conversation in times past; so in election, they are distinguished from others; as in redemption men are redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; so in election they are chosen out of the same: election and redemption are of the same persons, and are commensurate to each other; they are distinct from the rest of mankind; vessels of mercy, in distinction from vessels of wrath; a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace; and election itself, as distinguished from the others, called the rest; while some are given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, others being beloved of God, are chosen from the beginning to salvation by Christ; for certain it is, that all the individuals of mankind, neither partake of the means fixed in the decree of election, sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; nor attain to the end of it, which, with respect to men, is eternal life and happiness; for all men are not sanctified by the Spirit of God; nor have all men faith in Christ, the way, the truth, and the life; nor do all men enter into life, or are eternally saved; some go into everlasting punishment. But the number of the chosen ones is not confined to any particular nation: for as God is the God both of the Jews and of the Gentiles; so those whom he has in election prepared for glory, in consequence of which he calls them by his grace; these are not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; and who are eventually, for the most part, the poor of this world, (James 2:5) men

mean and despicable in the eyes of it; and these are but few in comparison, not only of the men of the world, but even of those that are externally called; "Many are called, but few are chosen", (Matthew 20:16) they are but a little flock, it is the pleasure of their heavenly Father to give the kingdom to, prepared for them from the foundation of the world: though considered absolutely by themselves, they are a great multitude, which no man can number, (Luke 12:32; Rev. 5:9).

And here is the proper place to discuss that question, Whether men were considered, in the mind of God, in the decree of election, as fallen or unfallen; as in the corrupt mass, through the fall; or in the pure mass of creature-ship, previous to it; and as to be created? There are some that think that the latter, so considered, were the objects of election in the divine mind; who are called supralapsarians; though of these some are of opinion that man was considered, as to be created, or creatable; and others, as created, but not fallen. The former seems best; that of the vast number of individuals that came up in the divine mind, that his power could create, those that he meant to bring into being, he designed to glorify himself by them in some way or another; the decrees of election, respecting any part of them; may be distinguished into the decree of the end, and the decree of the means. The decree of the end, respecting some, is either subordinate to their eternal happiness, or ultimate; which is more properly the end, the glory of God; and if both are put together, it is a state of everlasting communion with God, for the glorifying the riches of his sovereign grace and goodness (Eph. 1:5, 6). The decree of the means, includes the decree to create men, to permit them to fall, to recover them out of it through redemption by Christ, to sanctify them by the grace of the Spirit, and completely save them; and which are not to be reckoned as materially many decrees, but as making one formal decree; or they are not to be considered as subordinate, but coordinate means, and as making up one entire complete medium; for it is not to be supposed that God decreed to create man, that he might permit him to fall; nor that he decreed to permit him to fall, that he might redeem, sanctify, and save him; but he decreed all this that he might glorify his grace, mercy, and justice. And in this way of considering the decrees of God, they think they sufficiently obviate and remove the slanderous calumny cast upon them, with respect to the other branch of predestination, which leaves men in the same state when others are chosen, and that for the glory of God. Which calumny is, that according to them, God made man to

damn him; whereas, according to their real sentiments, God decreed to make man, and made man, neither to damn him, nor save him, but for his own glory; which end is answered in them, some way or another. Again, they argue that the end is first in view, before the means; and the decree of the end is, in order of nature, before the decree of the means; and what is first in intention, is last in execution: now as the glory of God is the last in execution, it must be first in intention; wherefore men must be considered, in the decree of the end, as not yet created and fallen; since the creation and permission of sin, belong to the decree of the means; which, in order of nature, is after the decree of the end: and they add to this, that if God first decreed to create man, and suffer him to fall, and then, out of the fall chose some to grace and glory; he must decree to create man without an end, which is to make God to do what no wise man would; for when a man is about to do any thing, he proposes an end, and then contrives and fixes on ways and means to bring about that end: and it cannot be thought that the all-wise and only-wise God should act otherwise; who does all his works in wisdom, and has wisely designed them for his own glory, (Prov. 16:4 they think also that this way of conceiving and speaking of these things, best expresses the sovereignty of God in them; as declared in the ninth of the Romans; where he is said to will such and such things, for no other reason but because he wills them; and hence the objector to the sovereign decrees of God is brought in saying, "Why does he yet find fault? Who hath resisted his will?" And the answer to it is taken from the sovereign power of the potter over his clay; to which is added, "What if God willing", &c. To do this or that, who has anything to say against it? He is accountable to none (Rom. 9:15, 19, 20, 22). And this way of reasoning is thought to suit better with the instance of Jacob and Esau, the children being not yet born, and having done neither good nor evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, (Rom. 9:11) than with supposing persons considered in predestination, as already created, and in the corrupt mass; and particularly it best suits with the unformed clay of the potter, out of which he makes one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour; on which Beza remarks, that if the apostle had considered mankind as corrupted, he would not have said, that some vessels were made to honour, and some to dishonour; but rather, that seeing all the vessels would be fit for dishonour, some were left in that dishonour, and others translated from dishonour to honour. They further observe, that elect angels could not be considered in the corrupt mass,

when chosen; since they never fell, and therefore it is most reasonable, that as they, so those angels that were not chosen, were considered in the same pure mass of creature-ship; and so in like manner men; to which they add the human nature of Christ, which is the object of election to a greater dignity than that of angels and men, could not be considered in the corrupt mass, since it fell not in Adam, nor never came into any corrupt state; and yet it was chosen out of the people, (Ps. 89:19) and consequently the people out of whom it was chosen, must be considered as yet not fallen and corrupt; and who also were chosen in him, and therefore not so considered. These are hints of some of the arguments used on this side of the question.

On the other hand, those who are called sublapsarians, and are for men being considered as created and fallen, in the decree of election, urge, (John 15:19) "I have chosen you out of the world". Now the world is full of wickedness, it lies in it, is under the power of the wicked one; the inhabitants of it live in sin, and all of them corrupt and abominable; and therefore they that are chosen out of them must be so too: but this text is not to be understood of eternal election, but of the effectual calling; by which men are called and separated from the world, among whom they have had their conversation before conversion, and according to the course of it have lived. They further observe, that the elect are called "vessels of mercy"; which supposes them to have been miserable, and so sinful, and to stand in need of mercy; and must be so considered in their election: but though through various means the elect are brought to happiness, which are owing to the mercy of God; such as the mission of Christ to save them, the forgiveness of their sins, their regeneration and salvation; and so fitly called "vessels of mercy"; yet it follows not that they were considered as in need of mercy in their choice to happiness. It is also said, that men are chosen in Christ as Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour; which implies, that an offence is given and taken, and reconciliation is to be made, and redemption from sin, and the curse of the law broken, and complete salvation to be effected by Christ; all which supposes men to be sinful, as it does: but then men are chosen in Christ, not as the meritorious cause of election, but as the means, or medium, of bringing them to the happiness they are chosen to. It is, moreover, taken notice of, that the transitus in scripture, is not from election to creation, but to calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, and salvation. But, for instance, can calling be supposed without creation? It is thought that this way of

considering men as fallen, in the decree of election, is more mild and gentle than the other, and best accounts for the justice of God; that since all are in the corrupt mass, it cannot be unjust in him to choose some out of it to undeserved happiness; and to leave others in it, who perish justly in it for their sins; or that since all are deserving of the wrath of God for sin, where is the injustice of appointing some not unto the wrath they deserve, but unto salvation by Christ, when others are foreordained to just condemnation and wrath for their sins? But on the other hand, what reason also can there be to charge God with injustice, that inasmuch as all are considered in the pure mass of creature-ship, that some should be chosen in it, and others be passed by in it; and both for his own glory? These are some of the principal arguments used on both sides; the difference is not so great as may be thought at first sight; for both agree in the main and material things in the doctrine of election; as,

1. That it is personal and particular, is of persons by name, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

2. That it is absolute and unconditional, not depending on the will of men, nor on anything to be done by the creature.

3. That it is wholly owing to the will and pleasure of God; and not to the faith, holiness, obedience, and good works of men; nor to a foresight of all or any of these.

4. That both elect, and non-elect, are considered alike, and are upon an equal footing in the decree of predestination; as those that are for the corrupt mass they suppose that they were both considered in it equally alike, so that there was nothing in the one that was not in the other, which was a reason why the one should be chosen and the other left; so those that are for the pure mass, suppose both to be considered in the same, and as not yet born, and having done neither good nor evil.

5. That it is an eternal act in God, and not temporal; or which commenced not in time, but from all eternity; for it is not the opinion of the sublapsarians, that God passed the decree of election after men were actually created and fallen; only that they were considered in the divine mind, from all eternity, in the decree of election, as if they were created and fallen; wherefore, though they differ in the consideration of the object of election, as thus and thus diversified, yet they agree in the thing, and agree to differ, as they should, and not charge one another with unsoundness and heterodoxy; for which there is no reason. Calvin was for the corrupt mass; Beza, who was co-pastor with him in the church

at Geneva, and his successor, was for the pure mass; and yet they lived in great peace, love, and harmony. The Contra- remonstrants in Holland, when Arminianism first appeared among them, were not agreed in this point; some took one side of the question, and some the other; but they both united against the common adversary, the Arminians. Dr. Twiss, who was as great a supralapsarian as perhaps ever was, and carried things as high as any man ever did, and as closely studied the point, and as well understood it, and perhaps better than anyone did, and yet he confesses that it was only "apex logicus", a point in logic; and that the difference only lay in the ordering and ranging the decrees of God: and, for my own part, I think both may be taken in; that in the decree of the end, the ultimate end, the glory of God, for which he does all things, men might be considered in the divine mind as creatable, not yet created and fallen; and that in the decree of the means, which, among other things, takes in the mediation of Christ, redemption by him, and the sanctification of the Spirit; they might be considered as created, fallen, and sinful, which these things imply; nor does this suppose separate acts and decrees in God, or any priority and posteriority in them; which in God are but one and together; but our finite minds are obliged to consider them one after another, not being able to take them in together and at once.

Fourthly, The date of election is next to be considered. And certain it is, that it was before men were born; "The children not being yet born - that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, (Rom. 9:11) nor can there be any difficulty in admitting this; for if there is none in admitting that a person may be chosen and appointed to an office before he is born, as there can be none, since God has asserted it of Jeremiah; "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou earnest out of the womb I sanctified thee", or set thee apart, "and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations", (Jer. 1:5) then there can be none in admitting that a person so early may be chosen to grace and glory. And this also is before the new birth, or before calling; for calling is the fruit and effect of election; the apostle says of the Thessalonians, "God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation", (2 Thess. 2:13) not from the beginning of the preaching of the gospel to them, or of the coming of that unto them; for that may come to, and be preached among a people, but not to their profit; may be without success, yea, be the savour of death unto death, (Heb. 4:2; 2 Cor. 2:16) and when the gospel first came to the Thessalonians, and was preached

among them, some believed, and others did not; yea, the Bereans are preferred unto them, for their ready reception of the word; indeed, to some at Thessalonica, it came not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost; and which was an evidence of their election, and by which they might know it. But then this was only a manifestation of their election; that itself was previous to the gospel's coming to them, and its operation on them; it was displayed therein, and thereby; but it commenced before; (see Acts 17: 1-4, 11; 1 Thess. 1:4, 5) nor was the choice of them from the beginning of their conversion, or when they were effectually called by the gospel; for that, as has been observed, is the effect and evidence of election is that according to which calling is, and therefore must be before it; "whom he did predestinate, them he also called" (Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9). Nor is this phrase, from the beginning, to be understood of the beginning of time, or of the creation; as in (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8) for though election began to operate and display itself in the distinct seeds of the woman, and of the serpent, in Abel and Cain, the immediate posterity of the first man, and the distinction has continued ever since; yet the thing itself which makes this distinction, or is the ground of it, was long before; to which may be added, that this phrase is expressive of eternity; "I was set up from everlasting; from the beginning; or ever the earth was", (Prov. 8:23) that is, before the world began, even from all eternity; as its being inclosed by such phrases as express the same shows: and in this sense it is to be taken in the text in the Thessalonians; and it is in so many words affirmed by the apostle, that this choice of men to holiness and happiness, was made "in Christ before the foundation of the world", (Eph. 1:4) and elsewhere it is said, that the book of life of the Lamb, in which the names of God's elect are set down, and the names of others left out, was written as early (Rev. 13:8 17:8). And that this act of election is an eternal act, or from eternity, may be concluded,

1. From the foreknowledge of God, which is eternal; God from all eternity foreknew all persons and things; there is nothing in time but what was known to him from eternity (Acts 15:18). Now men are elected according to the foreknowledge of God; and "whom he did foreknow he did predestinate", (1 Peter 1:2; Rom. 8:29) wherefore, as the foreknowledge of God is eternal, the choice he makes upon it must be so too; and especially as this foreknowledge is not a bare prescience of persons and things, but what has love and affection to the objects of it joined unto it: wherefore,

2. The eternity of election may be concluded from

the love of God to his people; for it is to that it is owing; "electio praesupponit dilectionem" election presupposes love; hence the apostle sets the character of being "beloved of the Lord" first, to the Thessalonians being "chosen" by him to "salvation", (2 Thess. 2:13) it is the immediate effect of love, and is inseparably connected with it; yea, is expressed by it; "Jacob have I loved" (Rom. 9:13). Now the love of God is an everlasting love; not only endures to all eternity, but was from all eternity: God loved Christ, as he affirms, before the foundation of the world; and in the same place he says, his Father loved his people as he loved him, (John 17:23, 24).

3. It may be argued from the covenant of grace, which is an everlasting covenant, from everlasting to everlasting; in which the goings of Christ as Mediator were of old, and promises were made before the world began; and grants of grace were made, and blessings of grace provided as early; and which covenant was made with the "chosen" of God; with Christ, the chosen Head, and with his people, as chosen in him; so that if this covenant was from everlasting, and made with chosen ones in Christ, their representative, then the choice of them in him must be as early, (2 Sam. 23:5; Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:9; Ps. 89:3; Mic. 5:2) and nothing is more clear than that he was set up as Mediator of this covenant from everlasting; and that his people were chosen in him, their covenant Head, before the foundation of the world (Prov. 8:22; Eph. 1:4).

4. This appears from the early preparation of grace and glory: grace was given them in Christ before the world was, and they blessed so soon with spiritual blessings in him; as they are a people afore prepared for glory, that is, in the purpose of God; so glory is the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; which is no other than a destination, or rather a predestination of that for them, and of them to that (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3, 4 Rom. 9:23; Matthew 25:34).

5. From the nature of the decrees of God in general, it must appear that this is eternal; for if God's decrees in general are eternal, as has been proved from his foreknowledge of whatever comes to pass; which is founded upon the certainty of his decrees, that so they shall be; and from his immutability, which could not be established if any new thoughts and resolutions arose in him, or new decrees in time were made by him; and therefore it may be reckoned a sure point, that such a special decree as this, respecting so important an affair as the salvation of all his people, as well as his own glory, must be eternal: and, indeed, the whole scheme of man's salvation by Christ, the "fellowship of the mystery" hid

in him, in which there is such an amazing display of the wisdom of God, is “according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord”, (Eph. 3:9-11) and which is no other than his purpose according to election, or respecting that.

Fifthly, The impulsive, or moving cause of this act in God, or what were the motives and inducements with God to take such a step as this: and these were not --

1. The good works of men; for this act passed in eternity, before any works were done; “The children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand”, (Rom. 9:11) and since this was done before them, they could never be the moving cause of it; they are the fruits and effects of it, and so cannot be the cause of it in any sense: it is owing to electing grace that any good works have been done by men since the fall of Adam; for what the prophet says of the people of Israel, is true of the whole world; “Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed”, a remnant, according to the election of grace, a few, whom, according to this decree, he makes holy and good, and enables them to perform good works, “we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah”, Romans 9:29 should have been like to the inhabitants of those cities, both in sin and punishment; as public and abandoned sinners, given up to the vilest lusts, without any check or restraint. Good works are what God has preordained, that his chosen ones should walk in them, (Eph. 2:10) and therefore the election of the one, and the pre-ordination of the other, must be previous to them, and they not the cause of either; the same cannot be both cause and effect, with respect to the same things: besides, there are no good works truly such, before the effectual calling, which is the fruit of election; before that they have only the appearance of good works, but are not really such, not being done in faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin; nor from love to God, which is the end of the commandment; nor in the name and strength of Christ; nor with a view to the glory of God. Men must be first created in Christ, or be new creatures in him, must be believers in him, and have the Spirit of Christ, and his grace put into them, ere they can perform good works: all which are done at the effectual calling, and not before. Moreover, God does not proceed according to mens works; nor are they the moving causes to him, in other acts of his grace; as not in the mission of his Son, (1 John 4:10) nor in calling, (2 Tim. 1:9) nor in justification, (Rom. 3:20, 28) nor in the whole of salvation, (Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8, 9) and so not in this first step to salvation, election; for then it

would not be of grace, of pure free grace, unmixed and unmerited grace, as it is said to be. And in the strongest manner it is denied to be of works, and that established by an argument which is unanswerable (Rom. 11:5, 6).

2. Neither is the holiness of men, whether in principle or in practice, or both, the moving cause of election to eternal life; it is an end to which men are chosen; “he hath chosen us in him - that we should be holy”, (Eph. 1:4) not because we were holy, but that we might be so, and so denotes something future, and which follows upon it; and it is a means fixed in the decree of election to another end, salvation; to which men are chosen, “through sanctification of the Spirit”, (2 Thess. 2:13) yea, the sanctification of God’s elect is the object of God’s decree; is the thing decreed, and so cannot be the cause of the decree; “This is the will of God, even your sanctification”, (1 Thess. 4:3) not barely the approving will of God, as being agreeable to his holy nature and holy law; nor merely the will of his precept, “Be ye holy”; but his decreeing will, or determinate counsel, that men should be holy: besides, holiness in principle and practice, does not take place until the effectual calling, and is the work of the Spirit of God in time, who calls men with an holy calling; not only to holiness, but works a principle of grace and holiness in them, whereby they are influenced and enabled, under the power of his grace, to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

3. Nor is faith the moving cause of election; the one is in time, the other in eternity: while men are in a state of unregeneracy, they are in a state of unbelief; they are, as without hope in God, so without faith in Christ; and when they have it, they have it not of themselves, of their own power and freewill; but they have it as the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit, flowing purely from his grace; and therefore cannot be the cause of electing grace: besides, it is the effect of that, it is a consequence that follows upon it, and is insured by it; “As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed”, (Acts 13:48) it is proper and peculiar to the elect of God; the reason why some men do not believe is, because “they are not of Christ’s sheep”, (John 10:26) his elect, given him by the Father; and the reason why others do believe is, because they are of Christ’s sheep, or his chosen ones, and therefore faith is given to them; which is called, “the faith of God’s elect” (Titus 1:1). Faith is not the cause of calling, and much less of election, which precedes that: the reason why men are called, is not because they believe, but they are called that they might believe; in which effectual call faith is given to them, as the evidence

of their election. Once more, faith is fixed as a means, in the decree of election; and therefore cannot be the cause of it (2 Thess. 2:13). To which may be added, if faith is the moving cause of election, men might be said rather to choose God and Christ, at least first, than they to choose him; whereas our Lord says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you”, (John 15:16) the apostles had chosen him, but not first; he first chose them; so that their choice of him had no influence on his choice of them: but if faith is the moving cause of election, then men rather choose Christ than he them; for what is faith but an high esteem of Christ, a choosing and preferring him, as a Saviour, to all others? A choosing that good part which shall never be taken away; and of the way of truth, or of Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

4. Nor is perseverance in faith, holiness, and good works, the moving cause of election; but the effect of it, and what is ensured by it: the reason why men persevere is, because they are the elect of God, who cannot be deceived totally and finally, so as to have their faith subverted, and overthrown, as that of nominal professors may be; because the foundation on which they are, stands sure; sealed with this seal, “the Lord knows them that are his” (Matthew 24:24; 2 Tim. 2:18, 19). Should it be said, that it is the foresight of these things in men, which moves God to choose them; it may be replied, that God’s foresight, or foreknowledge of things future, is founded on the determinations of his will concerning them; God foresees, or foreknows, that such and such a man will believe, become holy, do good works, and persevere therein to glory; because he has determined to give faith to them, work holiness in them, enable them to perform good works, and cause them to persevere therein to the end, and so be saved; and what is this, but the doctrine contended for? It is no other than a decree to give grace and glory to some persons for his own glory, and to deny them to others.

The truth of all this might be illustrated and confirmed by the case of infants dying in infancy; who, as soon as they are in the world, almost, are taken out of it. Now such a number as they are, can never be thought to be brought into being in vain, and without some end to be answered; and which, no doubt, is the glory of God, who is and will be glorified in them, some way or another, as well as in adult persons: now though their election is a secret to us, and unrevealed; it may be reasonably supposed, yea, in a judgment of charity it may rather be concluded, that they are all chosen, than that none are; and if it is allowed that any of them may

be chosen, it is enough to my present purpose; since the election of them cannot be owing to their faith, holiness, obedience, good works, and perseverance, or to the foresight of these things, which do not appear in them.

In short, these maxims are certainly true, and indisputable, that nothing in time can be the cause of what was done in eternity; to believe, to be holy, to do good works, and persevere in them, are acts in time, and so cannot be causes of election, which was done in eternity; and that nothing out of God can be the cause of any decree, or will in him; he is no passive Being, to be wrought upon by motives and inducements without him; for if his will is moved by anything without him, that must be superior to him, and his will must become dependent on that; which to say of God, is to speak very unworthily of him. God wills things because it so pleases him; predestination is according to the good pleasure of his will; election is according to his foreknowledge; which is no other than his free favour and good will to men, (Eph. 1:5; 1 Peter 1:2) no other reason can be given of God’s will or decree to bestow grace and glory on men, for his own glory, and of his actual donation of them, but what our Lord gives; “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight” (Matthew 11:25,26).

Sixthly, The means fixed in the decree of election, for the execution of it, or in order to bring about the end intended, are next to be inquired into; which are, the principal of them, the mediation of Christ, and redemption by him, the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. The mediation of Christ; Christ, as God, is the efficient cause of election; in his office capacity as an Head, the elect are chosen in him, as members of him; and though his mediation, bloodshed, sufferings, and death, are not the meritorious cause of election, yet Christ in them is the medium of the execution of it; that is, of bringing the chosen ones, through grace, to glory, whereby God is glorified, and so the end of it is answered: men are said to be chosen “unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ”, (1 Peter 1:2) which words, though they seem to express the ends of election, yet are such as have the nature of means, in order to further ends, the salvation of men, and the glory of God therein. Obedience may intend the obedience of Christ, both active and passive, or his subjection to the law, and fulfilment of it, both with respect to its precepts and penalty, by which men are justified in the sight of God, and so are entitled to eternal life and happiness; and to the blood of Jesus Christ are owing, the redemption of men, the remission

of their sins, and the atonement of them, which issue in their salvation, and make way for the glorifying of the justice of God, as well as the grace of God in it: and the “sprinkling” of this blood, denotes an application of it to the conscience, whereby it is purged from dead works, and the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience; and which speaks peace, and yields comfort, and causes the soul to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Moreover, men are chosen to salvation, “through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth”, as means to that end, (2 Thess. 2:13). The sanctification of the Spirit, is the work of grace on the heart, begun in regeneration, and carried on by the Spirit, until it is perfected by him; and this is necessary to salvation, for without holiness, even perfect holiness, no man shall see the Lord; and therefore it is fixed as a means of it, and is made as sure and certain by the decree of election, as the end, salvation itself; and, being fixed as a mean, in this decree, confirms what has been observed, that it cannot be the cause of it: and this proves that the doctrine of election can be no licentious doctrine, but a doctrine according to godliness; since it makes such sure provision for holiness, as well as for happiness. “Belief of the truth” may signify, not a bare belief of the Gospel, and the truths of it; for though they are to be believed by all the saved ones, yet this may be where neither election, nor calling, nor sanctification, ever take place; even in reprobates, and devils themselves: but faith in Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life; and believing in him with the heart, unto righteousness, and with which salvation is connected, and to which it is necessary, and is a mean of it; and which being fixed in the decree of election, as such is secured by it, and certainly follows upon it.

Seventhly, The ends settled in the decree of election are both subordinate and ultimate; the subordinate ones have indeed the nature of means with respect to the ultimate one: there are many things to which the elect of God, predestinated or chosen, both with respect to grace and glory, which are subordinate to the grand end, the glory of God. So God is said to “predestinate” them “to be conformed to the image of his Son”, to be made like unto him, not so much in his sonship, nor in his sufferings, as in his holiness: man was made after the image of God, this by sinning he came short of; in regeneration the image of Christ is stamped, the lines of his grace are drawn upon, and he himself is formed in the hearts of his people; and into which image they are more and more changed through transforming views of his glory; and which will be complete in the

future state, when saints will see him as he is; and to this they are predestinated, and that in order to another end, that Christ “might be the firstborn among many brethren”; the brethren are the predestinated ones, who are brethren to each other; and these are many, the many sons Christ brings to glory; and he is the firstborn among them; and that he may appear to be so, he is set up as the pattern of them, to whose image they are predestinated to be conformed, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, (Rom. 8:29) moreover they are said to be “predestinated to the adoption of children”, (Eph. 1:5) which may be understood either of the grace of adoption, the blessing itself, which predestination to it is no other than a preparation of it in the purposes and decrees of God, in his council and covenant, (2 Cor. 6:18) or the inheritance adopted to, which they obtain in Christ, being predestinated to it according to a divine purpose, (Eph. 1:11) likewise they are chosen to be “holy and without blame”, (Eph. 1:4) even to unblameable holiness, which is begun in this life and perfected in the other; when they will appear before the throne in the sight of God without fault, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: also they are said to be chosen unto faith; “God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith”, (James 2:5) not that they were, or were considered rich in faith when God chose them, but he chose them to be rich in faith, as the words may be supplied, as well as to be heirs of the kingdom; and this end is always answered, such as are chosen do believe; “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48). Once more, the elect are chosen to obedience and good works; the text in (1 Peter 1:2) which has been already observed, will bear to be interpreted of the obedience of the elect, in consequence both of their election and their sanctification; and certain it is, that good works are what “God has before ordained that his elect ones should walk in them”, (Eph. 2:10) these are subordinate ends which respect grace, and are in order to a further end, glory and happiness, which is sometimes expressed by salvation; “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ”, (1 Thess. 5:9) and again, “God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation”, (2 Thess. 2:13) salvation was fixed upon, and the method of it contrived in eternity; Christ was sent into the world, and came to effect it; he is become the author of it by his obedience and sufferings; this is not only published in the Gospel, but it is applied to God’s elect in conversion; but the full enjoyment of it is yet to come, (Rom. 13:11) the saints are now heirs of it, are kept unto it, and Christ will appear to put them

into the possession of it, and to this they are chosen, (1 Peter 1:2, 5; Heb. 1:14, 9:28) this end is also expressed by eternal life, "As many as were ordained to eternal life" (Acts 13:48). This is begun in grace now, which is a well of living water springing up to it; he that believes has it already in some sense; the knowledge of God and Christ is the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it; and it will lie hereafter in a life of perfect knowledge and holiness, and in uninterrupted communion with God to all eternity; and to this the elect are ordained.

Now all these ends, both respecting grace and glory, are subordinate ones to the grand and ultimate end of all, the glory of God; for as God swears by himself, because he could swear by no greater, so because a greater end could not be proposed than his own glory, he has set up that as the supreme end of all his decrees; he has made, that is, has appointed, "all things for himself", for his own glory, (Prov. 16:4) as all things are from him, as the first cause, they are all to him as the last end, (Rom. 11:36) and with respect to the decree of election, it is the glory of his grace mixed with justice, which is the end of it; the election of men to unblameable holiness, and the predestination of them to the adoption of children, are said to be "to the praise of the glory of his grace", (Eph. 1:4-6) that his free and sovereign grace might be displayed and glorified thereby; and that men who are the chosen generation and peculiar people, might show forth the praises of it; as, they do in part now, and will do it perfectly hereafter; for they are a people he has formed for himself both in election and the effectual calling, for this end and purpose, (Isa. 43:21; 1 Peter 2:9) his great end in election is to "make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of his mercy"; that is, the riches, the fulness, and plenty of his glorious and sovereign grace and mercy on the objects of it, (Rom. 9:23) and not the glory of his grace and mercy only, but of his justice also; for which provision is made in the decree of the means, by setting forth, or pre-ordaining, Christ "to be the propitiation", or to make atonement, "for sin; to declare his righteousness", the justice of God, "that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus", (Rom. 3:25, 26) and so the glory of God, of his justice and holiness, as well as of his grace and mercy, appear to be great in the salvation of men; here mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other; and God is glorified in all his perfections, which is the great end in view.

Eighthly, The blessings and benefits flowing from election are many, indeed all spiritual blessings; it is as it were the rule, measure, and standard according

to which they are communicated; the several chains in man's salvation are connected with it, and hang and depend upon it, (Eph. 1:3,4; Rom. 8:30) they need only be just named in order, since they have been suggested under the former heads.

a. Effectual Calling. "Whom he did predestinate, them he called"; all the predestinated, or chosen ones, are in time called, and are called according to the eternal purpose and grace of God in election (Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9).

b. Faith and holiness, and indeed every grace of the Spirit. Holiness is both an end and a mean in this decree, as before observed, and made certain by it; faith follows upon it as a free gift of grace, and so hope and love, and every other grace.

c. Communion with God. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee", (Ps. 65:4) to come into his presence, and enjoy it in his house, his word, and ordinances.

d. Justification; which is secretly a branch of it, and openly as to the manifestation of it, flows from it; "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth"; that is, the elect; who because they are chosen in Christ, they are justified in him (Rom. 8:33).

e. Adoption; to which the elect are predestinated, and are denominated the children of God, being given to Christ as such when chosen in him, before the incarnation of Christ, redemption by him, or having the Spirit from him (Heb. 2:13, 14; John 11:52; Gal. 4:6).

f. Glorification; "Whom he did predestinate them he glorified", (Rom. 8:30) the elect, the vessels of mercy, are "afore prepared for glory", for eternal glory and happiness; and are chosen and called to the obtaining of the glory of Christ, which the Father has given to him to bestow upon them, and which they will most certainly enjoy (Rom. 9:23; 2 Thess. 2:13,14).

Ninthly, The various properties of election may be gathered from what has been said of it; as, 2b9a. That it is eternal; it does not commence upon believing, and much less at perseverance in faith and holiness; but it was an act in God before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

2. It is free and sovereign; God was not obliged to choose any; and as it is, he chooses whom he will, and for no other reason excepting his own glory, but because he will; "what if God willing", &c. And the difference in choosing one and not another is purely owing to his will (Rom. 9:18, 22, 23).

3. It is absolute and unconditional; clear of all motives in man, or conditions to be performed by him;

for it “stands not of works, but of him that calleth”, the will of him that calls (Rom. 9:11).

4. It is complete and perfect; it is not begun in eternity and completed in time, nor takes its rise from the will of God, and is finished by the will of man; nor is made perfect by faith, holiness, obedience, and persevering in well doing, but has its complete being in the will of God at once.

5. It is immutable and irrevocable; God never repents of, nor revokes the choice he has made; some choose their friends and favourites, and alter their minds and choose others; but God is in one mind, and never makes any alteration in the choice he has made; and hence their state is safe and secure.

6. It is special and particular; that is, those who are chosen are chosen to be a special people above all others, and are particular persons, whose names are written in the book of life; not in general, men of such and such characters, but persons well known to God, and distinctly fixed on by him.

7. Election may be known by the persons, the objects of it; partly by the blessings flowing from it, and connected with it, before observed, bestowed upon them; for to whomsoever such blessings of grace are applied, they must be the elect of God, (Rom. 8:30) they may know it from the efficacy of the Gospel upon them, in their calling and conversion, (1 Thess. 1:4, 5) and by the Spirit of God testifying their adoption to them, to which they are predestinated, (Rom. 8:15, 16) and they may be able to make it known to others by their holy lives and conversations; which is meant by making their calling and election sure, even by their good works, as some copies read, (2 Peter 1:10) since both calling and election are to be made sure, and therefore by some third thing: indeed no man can know his election of God until he is called; it would be presumption in him to claim this character, until he is born again; nor should any man conclude himself a reprobate because a sinner, since all men are sinners; even God’s elect, who are by nature, and in no wise better than others, but children of wrath, even as others.

There are many things objected to this doctrine of election; but since it is so clear and plain from scripture, and is written as with a sunbeam in it, all objections to it must be mere cavil. It is urged, that God is said to be “good to all, and his tender mercies over all his works”, (Ps. 145:9) which seems inconsistent with his choosing some and leaving others; but this is to be understood not of his special grace, but of his providential goodness, which extends to the elect and non-elect, the evil and

the good, the just and the unjust, (Matthew 5:45) and in this sense he is the saviour, preserver, and bountiful benefactor of all men, but especially of them that believe (1 Tim. 4:10). It is observed that Christ says he was sent not to “condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved”, and therefore not some only but all; but to understand this of all the individuals in the world is not true, because all are not saved; and so this end of Christ’s mission, so understood, is not answered; but by the world is meant the world of God’s elect, whom he was reconciling in Christ, and for whom Christ gave his life, and became the propitiation for their sins, even for all the chosen throughout the whole world, and particularly among the Gentiles. Nor is 1 Timothy 2:4 any objection to this doctrine, “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”; for all men are not eventually saved, nor do all come to the knowledge of the truth of the Gospel; nor indeed have all the means of that knowledge: but the sense is, either, that all that are saved, God wills to be saved; or that it is his will that men of all sorts and of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, should be saved; which agrees with the context (1 Tim. 2:1, 2, 7). And when it is said of God, that he is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”, (2 Peter 3:9) this must be interpreted, not of all mankind, but of the elect, to whom this and the preceding epistle are inscribed, and who are in (2 Peter 3:8) styled “beloved”, and in this verse, the “us” towards whom “God is long-suffering”; now it is the will and pleasure of God that none of those should perish, but all in due time be brought to faith in Christ, and to repentance towards God: but objections from hence, with others of the like kind, are not sufficient to overturn this truth, so abundantly established in the sacred scriptures.

Chapter 3

OF THE DECREE OF REJECTION, OF SOME ANGELS, AND OF SOME MEN.

I make use of the word “rejection” in this article, partly because it is a scriptural phrase and ascribed to God, and partly because it is that act of God which gives the name of reprobate to any; and is the foundation of that character, “reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them”, (Jer 6:30) and stands opposed to election, (1 Sam. 15:26, 10:24) but chiefly because the other word reprobation, through wrong and frightful ideas being affixed to it, carries in it with many a sound harsh and disagreeable; or otherwise they are of the same signification, and no

amendment is made in the doctrine or sense of it, by using the one instead of the other. This doctrine of rejecting some angels and some men from the divine favour, is spoken of but sparingly in scripture, yet clearly and plainly; though chiefly left to be concluded from that of election, and from whence it most naturally and rationally follows. I shall begin with,

I. The rejection of some of the angels, which consists of two parts:

1. A non-election, or preterition of them, a passing over them or passing by them, when others were chosen; and which may be concluded from the choice of others; for if some were elect, others must be non-elect; if some were chosen, others were not; if some were taken, others must be passed by and left: that some of them are elect is certain, they are expressly called “elect angels”, (1 Tim. 5:21) and consequently are distinguished from others who are not elected; or otherwise the title and character of “elect” must be insignificant and impertinent. Both these were considered alike, upon an equal foot, when the one were elected, and the other not; they were viewed as not yet created and fallen, but as lying in the pure mass of creature-ship or creability; God saw in his power what creatures of this kind he could produce into being, as he also saw in his will whom he would; and of those he could and would create, he determined to choose some and leave others, and both for his own glory; for they could not be considered as fallen creatures, or in the corrupt mass, since the elect angels never fell; and the moment they were elected, the others were passed by or rejected; and so must be under the same consideration; and consequently the election of the one, and the rejection of the other, must be wholly owing to the sovereign will of God: both these were brought into being as God determined they should, and are equally his creatures, (Ps. 104:4) and were both made pure and holy creatures, angels of light, bright morning stars, shining in the purity and holiness of their nature; for such were Satan and his angels in their original creation; the devil, our Lord says, “abode not in the truth”, (John 8:44) which implies that he had been in the truth, though he continued not in it; in his allegiance and fidelity to God his creator; in his integrity, purity, and holiness, as a creature of veracity; but framing lies, he became the father of them. What he was in, but abode not in, is the “first estate”, of integrity, innocence, and happiness, in which he was created, but kept it not (Jude 1:6). To some angels God decreed to give, and did give grace to confirm them in the state in which they were created; these are the elect angels, who are said

to be “mighty”, and to “excel in strength”; not only in natural, but in spiritual strength. To others he decreed not to give confirming grace, but to deny it to them; and which he was not obliged to give, it being what could not be challenged by the laws and dues of creation, and was mere favour to those on whom it was bestowed; wherefore the others were left to the mutability of their will, which is that weakness and folly the angels were chargeable with in their creation state, (Job 4:18) hence of their own freewill they sinned and fell, and left their habitation, (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6) what their sin was by which they fell, will be considered in course, when we come to the fall of Adam, and of theirs; this leads on to observe the other part of the decree respecting them.

2. The appointment of them to wrath and damnation; in this they were viewed as sinful, fallen creatures; this decree is meant by their being “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day”, (Jude 1:6; 2 Peter 2:4) for by chains are meant the purposes and decrees of God, by which they are bound and held fast, and from which they cannot loose themselves; and as the decrees of God are called “mountains of brass”, (Zech. 6:1) so they may be called chains of iron and brass for the same reasons; namely, their firmness, mutability, and duration; they are “everlasting” chains, and in these they are reserved under darkness; meaning either the state of darkness in which they are, being deprived of that light and knowledge they had; and also being under horror and black despair, without the least gleam of the light of joy and comfort; or that state of darkness to which they are appointed and reserved, even that “blackness of darkness” to which the wandering stars, as these may be said to be, are reserved, (Jude 1:13) and moreover they are appointed and reserved “to the judgment of the great day”, to the great day of the last judgment; when they will be brought forth in chains before the judgment seat of Christ, and will have their final sentence passed and executed on them, which as yet seems not to have been done, (Matthew 8:29) then will Christ sit on the throne of judgment, and saints will stand by, together with the good angels, as approvers of the righteous sentence: and therefore saints are said to “judge angels”, as well as the world of the ungodly, (1 Cor. 6:2, 3) that is, the evil angels, to which judgment they are appointed by the decree of God; and to endure eternal wrath and damnation; signified by “everlasting fire, prepared”, in the decrees and purposes of God, “for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). I proceed to,

II. The decree concerning the rejection of some of

the sons of men. It may be observed, that we can hear and read of the non-election and rejection of angels, and of their pre-ordination to condemnation and wrath, with very little emotion of mind: the devils may be cast down to hell, to be everlastingly damned, and be appointed thereunto, and it gives no great concern; no hard thoughts against God arise, no charge of cruelty, want of kindness to his creatures and offspring, and of injustice to them; but if anything of this kind is hinted at, with respect to any of the apostate sons of Adam, presently there is an outcry against it; and all the above things are suggested. What is the reason of this difference? It can be only this, that the latter comes nearer home, and more nearly affects us; it is partiality to ourselves, our nature, and race, to which this is owing; otherwise, far greater severity, if it may be so called, is exercised on fallen angels, than on fallen man; for God has not spared one of the angels that sinned, provided no saviour for them, nor so much as given them the means of grace; but consigned them all over at once to everlasting wrath and ruin: whereas, not only a Saviour is provided for fallen men, and means of grace allowed them, but thousands, and ten thousands, millions and millions of them are saved, by the abundant mercy and grace of God, through Christ. But to go on,

First, I shall prove that there is a non-election, or rejection of some of the sons of men, when others were chosen; and, indeed, from the election of some, may fairly be inferred, the non-election of others. Common sense tells us, that of persons or things, if some are chosen, others must be left: if there is a remnant of the sons of men, according to the election of grace, then there are others not included in it, which are left unchosen, and are called the rest. "The election", that is, elect men, "hath obtained it", righteousness and eternal life; "and the rest were blinded" (Rom. 11:5, 7). Our Lord says, "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen", (John 13:18) plainly intimating, that all were not chosen, and it is certain one was not, and whom he calls "the son of perdition"; one, not only deserving of it, but appointed to it; for though chosen to an office, as an apostle, yet not to grace and glory, (John 17:12) and how many such there be, no man can pretend to say; but it is evident there are some, and who are generally described by negative characters; as not known by God and Christ; the elect are God's people, whom he knows; they are elect, according to his foreknowledge; which carries in it love and affection to them; but of others Christ says, "I never knew you"; he knew them by his omniscience, but not with such knowledge as he knows

the elect of God; he never knew them as the objects of his Father's love, and his own; he never knew them as the objects of his Father's choice, and his own; he never knew them in the gift of his Father to him, (Matthew 7:23) hence they are represented as "not" loved, which is meant by being hated: "Esau have I hated"; that is, had not loved him, as he had Jacob; for it cannot be understood of positive hatred, for God hates none of his creatures, as such, only as workers of iniquity; but of negative hatred, or of not loving him; which, in comparison of the love he bore to Jacob, might be called hatred: in which sense the word is used in Luke 14:26. Moreover, they are spoken of as "not" being given to Christ; for if there are some that are "given" to him "out of the world", then there must be a world which are not given, and for whom he has not so much concern as even to pray for them, (John 17:6, 9) they are frequently described, as not having their names written, and not to be found written in the Lamb's book of life, (Rev. 13:8, 17:8, 20:15). Now as election is signified by the writing of names in the book of life, non-election is expressed by not writing the names of some there; and if those whose names are written there, are the elect, then those whose names are not written there, but are left out, must be non-elect: to which may be added, that our Lord says of these persons, "Ye are not of my sheep", and gives this as a reason why they believed not in him (John 10:26). But the goats he will place on his left hand, pass sentence of condemnation on them, and send them into everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:33, 41, 46).

Moreover, from the effects of election not having place in some persons, it may be concluded, that there are such who are non-elect. The effectual calling is a certain fruit and effect of election; "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called", (Rom. 8:30) not only externally, but internally, with an holy and heavenly calling, to grace here, and glory hereafter. But are all called in this manner? No; there are some who have not so much as the outward call by the ministry of the word, have not the external means of grace; but as they sin without law, perish without it (Rom. 10:14, 2:12). Those who are chosen, are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ; they are chosen to holiness, and through sanctification of the Spirit. But are all made like to Christ, and conformed to his image? Do not many bear the image of Satan, imitate him, and do his lusts? Are all men made holy, or have they the sanctification of the Spirit? Whom God predestinates he justifies, by the righteousness of his Son. But are all men justified? No; for though he justifies some of

all sorts and nations; as the circumcised Jews by faith, and the uncircumcised Gentiles through faith, yet not every individual; yea, there is a world that will be condemned, and consequently not predestinated to life (1 Cor. 11:32). They that are chosen, are predestinated to the adoption of children, and enjoy both the grace and inheritance of children. But are all children and heirs? Is there not such a distinction among men, as children of God, and children of the devil; between whom there is, and will be, an eternal difference? (1 John 3:10) and therefore there must be an election, and a non-election among them. Moreover, whom God has predestinated, or chosen to life and happiness, these he glorifies, (Rom. 8:30) they obtain the glory of Christ, which his Father has given him for them, and to which they are chosen and called (John 17:22; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14). But are all glorified? Do not some go into perdition, even into everlasting punishment? And therefore must be considered as non-elect (Rev. 17:8; Matthew 25:46). To all which may be added, that those that are given to Christ, which is but another phrase for being chosen in him; these, he says, shall come to him, and he will in no wise cast them out; yea, that they are his sheep, whom he must bring to his Father, to himself, to his fold, to grace and glory (John 6:37 10:16). But are there not some whom Christ will drive away from him, and to then, say, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire" (Matthew 7:23, 25:41). All this put together most clearly and fully proves, that there are some who are not chosen of God, but rejected by him.

Secondly, The parts of this decree, concerning the rejection of men, are commonly said to be preterition and pre-damnation.

I. Preterition is God's passing by some men, when he chose others: and in this act, or part of the decree, men are considered as in the pure mass of creature-ship, or creability; in which state they are found, when passed by or rejected, and in which they are left, even just as they are found, nothing put into them; but were left in the pure mass, as they lay, and so no injury done them; nor is God to be charged with any injustice towards them: in this act sin comes not into consideration, as it does in a following one; for in this men are considered as not created, and so not fallen; but as unborn, and having done neither good nor evil (Rom. 9:11). And this is a pure act of sovereignty in God, and to his sovereign will it is to be ascribed; who has the same sovereign power, and greater, than the potter has over his clay, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour (Rom. 9:19, 20, 22). This being expressed, as

before observed, by negative phrases, is, by some, called negative reprobation.

2. Pre-damnation is God's appointment, or pre-ordination of men to condemnation for sin; and is what is spoken of in Jude 1:4. "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation"; and who are described by the following characters, "ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and, or even our Lord Jesus Christ"; which, when observed, is sufficient to clear this decree of God from the charge of cruelty and injustice: and this, by some, is called, positive reprobation. The word **דָּעַן**, translated "condemnation", in the above quoted text, some render "judgment", and interpret it of judicial blindness and hardness of heart; which appeared in the persons embracing and spreading false and pernicious doctrines spoken of; and this is, indeed, what they are foreordained, or appointed to, as a punishment of former sins; for this hardness, &c. presupposes former sins, and an obstinate continued course in them; either against the light and law of nature, which they like not to walk according to, and therefore God gives them up, pursuant to his decree, to a reprobate mind, to do things not convenient, (Rom. 1:24, 28) or against divine revelation, precepts, counsels, and admonitions, like Israel of old, hearkening not to the voice of the Lord, in his word, nor paying any regard to his instructions; and therefore he gives them up, as he determined to do, to their own hearts' lusts, and to walk in their own counsels, (Ps. 81:11, 12) and this is the sense of the word in John 9:39. God hardens some mens hearts, as he did Pharaoh's, and he wills to harden them, or he hardens them according to his decreeing will; "Whom he will he hardeneth", (Rom. 9:18) this he does not by any positive act, by infusing hardness and blindness into the hearts of men; which is contrary to his purity and holiness, and would make him the author of sin; but by leaving men to their natural blindness and hardness of heart; for the understanding is naturally darkened; and there is a natural blindness, hardness, and callousness of heart, through the corruption of nature, and which is increased by habits of sinning; men are in darkness, and choose to walk in it; and therefore God, as he decreed, gives them up to their own wills and desires, and to Satan, the god of the world, they choose to follow, and to be led captive by, who blinds their minds yet more and more, lest light should break in unto them, (Eph. 4:18; Ps. 82:5; 2 Cor. 4:4) and also God may be said to harden and blind, by denying them that grace which can only cure them of

their hardness and blindness, and which he, of his free favour, gives to his chosen ones, (Ezek. 36:26, 27) but is not obliged to give it to any; and because he gives it not, he is said to hide, as he determined to hide, the things of his grace from the wise and prudent, even because it so seemed good in his sight, (Matthew 11:25, 26). Hence this blindness, hardness, insensibility, and stupidity, are represented as following upon non-election; not as the immediate effect of it, but as consequences of it; and such as neither judgments nor mercies can remove; and bring persons to a right sense of sin, and repentance for it (Rom. 11:7-10). The sin and fall of Adam having brought him into a state of infidelity, in which God has concluded him: and he does not think fit to give to every man that grace which can only cure him of his unbelief, and without which, and unless almighty power and grace go along with the means they have, they cannot believe; whereby the decrees, predictions, and declarations of God are fulfilled in them, (John 12:37-40) yea, as Christ is said to be set, or appointed, “for the fall of many in Israel”, (Luke 2:34) so many are appointed to stumble at the Word, at him, the Stone of stumbling, and Rock of offence, being children of disobedience, and left as such; when, to those who are a chosen generation, he is a precious cornerstone, and they believe in him, and are saved by him, (1 Peter 2:7-9) hence we read of some, who, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, to them are sent by God strong delusions, and they are given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned; not that God infuses any delusion or deceit into them, but because of their disbelief of, and disrespect to him and his Word, he suffers their corruptions to break forth and prevail, not giving restraining grace to them; so that they become a prey to them that lie in wait to deceive; and being easy and credulous, they believe lies spoken in hypocrisy; which issue in their damnation; while others, beloved of the Lord, and chosen from the beginning to salvation, obtain the glory of Christ (2 Thess. 2:10-14). But though all this is a most certain truth, and is contained in the decree we are speaking of, yet condemnation, or everlasting punishment, seems to be meant in the passage quoted; or, however, this is what some men are foreordained unto.

Some will have it, that this refers to something fore-written, as they choose to render the word; to some prophecy concerning the condemnation of those persons, and particularly to that of Enoch, (Jude 1:14, 15) but it is not certain that prophecy was ever written; besides, a prophecy, or prediction, of anything future,

is founded upon an antecedent predetermination and appointment; God foretells by his prophets what will be, because he has determined it shall be; if, therefore, the condemnation of those persons was foretold in any written prophecy, it was because God had decreed it should come upon them, or they be brought into it. It seems to have the same sense with God’s appointing men unto wrath; which, though not in so many words expressed, is manifestly implied; as when the apostle says, “God hath not appointed us to wrath”, who yet were children of wrath, and deserving of it as others; “but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ”: it suggests, that though he had not appointed them, yet he had appointed others to wrath, and who are therefore called “vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction”, by their own sins and transgressions (1 Thess. 5:9; Rom. 9:22). With which agrees what is said of some wicked men, who are “reserved” in the purposes and decrees of God, “to the day of destruction”; in consequence of which, “they shall be brought to the day of wrath”, which God has appointed for the execution of his wrath; and hence the casting of the fury of his wrath, in all the dreadful instances of it, is called “the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed; unto him of God”, (Job 21:30, 20:23-29) and this is the sense of Proverbs 16:4, for the meaning of the text is not, nor is it our sense of it, as some misrepresent it, as if God made man to damn him; we say no such thing, nor does the text; our sentiment is, that God made man neither to damn nor save him; but he made him for his own glory, and he will be glorified in him, in one way or another: nor that he made man wicked, in order to damn him; for God made man upright; men made themselves wicked by their own inventions; which are the cause of damnation: but the true sense of the passage is, that “the Lord hath made”, that is, has appointed “all things for himself”, for his own glory: and should it be objected, that the wicked could not be for his glory, it is added, “Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil”; that is, he has appointed the wicked for the day of evil, to suffer justly for their sins, to the illustration of the glory of his justice.

Thirdly, The causes of this act.

I. The efficient cause is God; it is the Lord, that makes all things for his own glory, and the wicked for the day of evil; it is God that appoints to wrath, and foreordains to condemnation; what if “God willing to show his wrath”, &c (Prov. 16:4; 1 Thess. 5:9; Rom. 9:22). And,

1. It is an act of his sovereignty, who does what he pleases in heaven and in earth; he does according

to his will in the armies of the heavens, and among the inhabitants of the earth; as he does all things, so this, according to the counsel of his will; for though it is sovereign, it is not in such sense arbitrary as to be without reason and wisdom; it is a wise counsel of his, for his own glory. The objector, introduced by the apostle, supposes this, that it is an act of his sovereign will; and therefore says, "Why does he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" And which the apostle denies not, but reasons upon it, and confirms it (Rom. 9:19-22).

2. It is agreeable to his justice: the same apostle treating on this subject asks, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" That is, to love one and hate another, to choose one and not another, before they were born, or had done good or evil; and he answers, "God forbid"; since in his act of passing by one, when he chose another, he left him as he found him, without putting, or supposing, any iniquity in him; without any charge of any sin or laying him under a necessity to commit any. In the act of pre-damnation, he considers him as a sinner, and foreordains him to punishment for his sins; and if it is no injustice in God to punish men for sin, it cannot be unjust in him to determine to punish for it: if the judgments of God on antichrist are true and righteous, and display his holiness and justice, it cannot be unrighteous in him to decree to inflict these judgments on him, and his followers, here and hereafter: if it is a righteous thing with God to render tribulation to them that trouble his people, and so to them that commit any other sin, it must be agreeable to his justice to appoint them to indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; even every soul of man that does evil, if he pleases.

3. Nor is this act contrary to his goodness; all persons and things are his own, and he may do with them as he pleases, without an impeachment of this or any other perfection of his; "Is thine eye evil", says he, "because I am good?" (Matthew 20:15). What distinguishing grace and goodness has been exercised towards fallen man, when no degree of sparing mercy was shown to fallen angels! And what goodness has been laid up, and wrought out, for many of the sons of Adam, though others have been rejected! And even on them that are rejected, what riches of providential goodness have been, and are bestowed on them, in the most plentiful and liberal manner! With what lenity, patience, forbearance, and "long-suffering", has God "endured the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction", fitted by themselves! (Rom. 2:4 9:22). This act of God is neither contrary to the

mercy, nor to the wisdom of God, nor to the truth and sincerity of God, in his promises, declarations, calls, &c. Nor to the holiness and justice of God; as I have elsewhere made abundantly to appear.

4. The moving, or impulsive cause of God's making such a decree, by which he has rejected some of the race of Adam from his favour, is not sin, but the good pleasure of his will: sin is the meritorious cause of eternal death, wrath, and damnation; wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, and comes upon the children of disobedience, whom God leaves in it; the wages, or demerit of sin, is death, even death eternal: but then it is not the impulsive cause of the decree itself; not of preterition, because that, as election, was before good or evil were done, and irrespective of either; nor of pre-damnation, God, indeed, damns no man but for sin; nor did he decree to damn any but for sin; but yet, though sin is the cause of damnation and death, the thing decreed, it is not the cause of the decree itself: it is the cause of the thing willed, but not the moving cause of God's will; for nothing out of God can move his will; if it could, the will of God would be dependent on the will and actions of men; whereas, his purpose, whether with respect to election or rejection, stands not on the works and will of men, but on his own will and pleasure: besides, if sin was the cause of the decree itself, or of God's will to reject men, then all would be rejected, since all fell in Adam; all are under sin, all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; all are, by nature, children of wrath, and deserving of it: what then could move God to choose one and reject another, but his sovereign goodwill and pleasure? That then is the sole moving and impulsive cause of such a decree; when we have searched the scriptures most thoroughly, and employed our reasoning powers to the highest pitch, and racked our invention to the uttermost; no other cause of God's procedure in this affair can be assigned, but what Christ has expressed; "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight"; as to hide the things of his grace and gospel from some, and reveal them to others; so to decree and determine within himself, to act in this manner, (Matthew 11:25, 26).

4. The final cause, or end of this decree, is his own glory; this is the ultimate end of all his decrees and appointments, and so of this, appointing the wicked for the day of evil; it was for this purpose he raised up Pharaoh, and decreed all he did concerning him, that he might show his power in him, his sovereignty and dominion over him, and that his name and glory might

be declared throughout all the earth: and the same view he has with respect to all the vessels of wrath, namely, to show his wrath, and to make his power known, in their destruction, which is of themselves; it is not the death and damnation of the sinner, in which he delights not, that is his ultimate end; it is his own glory, the glory of his perfections, and particularly the glory of his justice and holiness (Prov. 16:4; Rom. 9:17, 22). 2d. Fourthly, The date of this decree is as ancient as eternity itself; wicked men are “before of old”, said to be “ordained to condemnation” (Jude 1:4). Some who would have the word rendered, “before written”, as already observed, suppose the text refers to a written prophecy, concerning the condemnation of those men, and that regard is had to a parallel place in 2 Peter 2:1-3. So Grotius. But if Jude had that in his view, he would never have said that they were “of old”, a long time ago, before written, and prophesied of; since, according to the common calculation, that epistle of Peter was written in the same year that this of Jude’s was: the date of election and rejection must be the same; Esau was hated, as early as Jacob was loved, or rejected when he was chosen; and both were done before they were born. If men were chosen from the beginning, that is, from eternity to salvation; then those that were not chosen, or not ordained to eternal life, were foreordained as early to condemnation; and so is the Syriac version of the text in Jude, “were from the beginning ordained”; the same date that is given of election in 2 Thessalonians 2:13. And, indeed, there can be no new decree, appointment, or purpose, made by God in time; if the decree of election was from eternity, that of rejection must be so too; since there cannot be one without the other; if some were chosen before the foundation of the world, others must be left, or passed by, as early; and, indeed, those whose names are left out of the book of life, are expressly said to be “not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 17:8). And from the whole,

Fifthly, The properties of this decree will appear to be much the same with those of the decree of election, and need be but just mentioned: as,

1. That it is an eternal decree of God. This did not arise in the mind of God in time, as no new act does, but was made before the foundation of the world.

2. That it is free and sovereign, owing to his own will and pleasure, not moved to it by anything out of himself; “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth”, (Rom. 9:18) and so he determined to do.

3. It is immutable and irrevocable; is it expressed by a decree, a pre-ordination? All the decrees of God are unalterable, there is an immutability in his counsel, let it be concerning what it may. Is it expressed by a writing or a fore-writing, as in Jude 1:4? It is such a writing as ever remains in full force. Did Pilate say, “what I have written, I have written”, signifying it should remain without any alteration? (John 19:22). Then it may be concluded, that what God has written shall remain, and never be revoked; for he is in one mind, and none can turn him.

4. It is of particular persons; it does not merely respect events, characters, and actions; but the persons of men; as they are persons who are chosen in Christ, and appointed, not to wrath, but to obtain salvation by him; so they are persons who are foreordained to condemnation, whose names are left out of the book of life, while others are written in it.

5. It is a most just and righteous decree; and no other but such can be made by God, who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Chapter 4

OF THE ETERNAL UNION OF THE ELECT OF GOD UNTO HIM.

The union of God’s elect unto him, their adoption by him, justification before him, and acceptance with him, being eternal, internal, and immanent acts in God; I know not where better to place them, and take them into consideration, than next to the decrees of God, and particularly the decree of election; since as that flows from the love of God, and is in Christ from everlasting, there must of course be an union to him so early; and since predestination to the adoption of children, and acceptance in the beloved, are parts and branches of it, (Eph. 1:4-6) they must be of the same date. I shall begin with the union of God’s elect in Christ. I shall not here treat of any time acts of union; as of our nature to the Son of God by his incarnation, when he became our brother, our near kinsman, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone; and we and he were of one, that is, of one nature, (Heb. 2:11, 14, 16) nor of the vital union of our persons to him in regeneration, when we are quickened by the power and grace of God, Christ is formed in our hearts, and we become new creatures in him, and are in him as living fruitful branches in him, the living vine; which is our open being in Christ, in consequence of a secret being in him from everlasting by electing grace (see Rom. 16:7; 2 Cor. 5:17, 12:2). Nor of the more open

and manifest union of the saints to God hereafter; who being once in Christ, are always found in him; die in union to him, rise from the dead by virtue of that union; and who will then, in soul and body, be one in God, Father, Son, and Spirit; as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; whose union to one another is the pattern and exemplar of theirs; and for the open manifestation of which Christ prays (John 17:21, 23). But I shall consider the union of the elect to God, as it is in its original, and as an eternal immanent act in God; and which is no other than the going forth of his heart in love to them, and thereby uniting them to himself; which love, as it is from everlasting, (Jer. 31:3; John 17:23, 24) so it is of a cementing and uniting nature; and, indeed, is the bond of union between God and his chosen people, or that by which he has taken them into near union with himself: love is the bond of union among men, of friendship one to another; it was this which knit the soul of Jonathan to the soul of David, so that he loved him as his own soul; it is the bond of the saints union to each other; their hearts are “knit together in love”: hence “charity”, or love, is called, “the bond of perfectness”, or the perfect bond, which joins and keeps them together (Col. 2:7 3:14). It was love which so closely cemented the hearts of the first Christians to one another, insomuch that the multitude of them were “of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 4:32). And now love must operate infinitely more strongly in the heart of God, attracting and uniting the objects of it to himself, giving them such a nearness and union to him which cannot be dissolved; nothing can “separate from the love of God”; not the fall of God’s elect in Adam; nor their actual sins and transgressions in a state of unregeneracy; nor their revoltings and backslidings after conversion, (Rom. 8:38, 39; Eph. 2:3, 4; Hosea 14:4). This bond of union is indissoluble by the joint power of men and devils. In virtue of this, the people of God become a part of himself, a near, dear, and tender part, even as the apple of his eye; have a place in his heart, are engraven on the palms of his hands, and ever on his thoughts; the desires and affections of his soul are always towards them, and he is ever devising and forming schemes for their welfare; how great is his goodness which he has laid up and wrought for them! (Zech. 2:8; Ps. 139:17; Song 7:10; Isa. 59:16; Ps. 31:19). The love of Christ to the elect, is as early as that of his Father’s love to him and them, and which, it seems, was a love of complacency and delight; for before the world was his “delights were with the sons of men”, (John 15:9; Prov. 8:30, 31) and this is of the same cementing and

uniting nature as his Father’s; it is this which causes him to stick closer than a brother to his people; and nothing can separate from his love to them, any more than from the love of the Father; having loved his own, he loves them to the end. This bond of union remains firm and sure, and gives such a nearness to him the church wished for; “Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm” (Song 8:6; Prov. 18:24; Rom. 8:35). The same may be said of the love of the Spirit; for it is the everlasting love of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, which is the bond of the union of God’s elect to the sacred three; they have all three loved the elect with an everlasting love; and thereby have firmly and everlastingly united them to themselves; and hence because of the Spirit’s love of them, and union to them, he, in time, becomes the Spirit of life and grace in them (Rom. 15:30). Now of this love union there are several branches, or which are so many illustrations and confirmations of it, and all in eternity; as, 1. An election union in Christ: this flows from the love of God, “electio praesupponit dilectionem”, election presupposes love; (see 2 Thess. 2:13) particular persons are said to be chosen in Christ, as Rufus, (Rom. 16:13) and the apostle says of himself and others, that God had chosen them “in Christ”, and that before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Election gives a being in Christ, a kind of subsistence in him; though not an “esse actu”, an actual being, yet at least an “esse representativum”, a representative being; even such an one as that they are capable of having grants of grace made to them in Christ, and of being blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and that before the world began, (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3, 4) and how they can be said to have a being in Christ, and yet have no union to him, I cannot conceive. Besides, in election there is a near relation commences between Christ and the elect; he is given to be an head to them, and they are given as members to him; and as such they are chosen together, he first in order of nature, as the head; and then they as members of him; nothing is more common with sound divines than to express themselves in this manner, when speaking of the election of Christ, and his people in him; particularly, says Dr. Goodwin, “an the womb, head and members are not conceived apart, but together, as having relation to each other; so were we and Christ (as making up one mystical body to God) formed together in the eternal womb of election.” And in the same place he says, “Jesus Christ was the head of election, and of the elect of God; and so in order of nature elected first, though in order of time we were elected together; in the womb of election he, the head,

came out first, and then we, the members.” Now what relation can well be thought of nearer, or more expressive of a close union, than this of head and members? Christ is the chosen head of the church, the church the chosen body of Christ, the fulness of him that fills all in all, (Eph. 1:22, 23) hence is the safety and security of the saints, being in Christ through electing grace, and united to him; and therefore said to be “preserved in” him; herein and hereby put into his hand, made the sheep of his hand, out of whose hands none can pluck them, nor they ever fall (Jude 1:1). 2. There is a conjugal union between Christ and the elect, which also flows from love, and commenced in eternity. By the institution of natural marriage, the persons between whom it is contracted become one flesh, as did Adam and Eve: and a nearer union than this cannot well be conceived of; whose marriage was a shadow and representation of that between Christ and his church; whom, having espoused, he nourishes and cherishes as his own flesh; and they become one, and have one and the same name, Christ, that is, Christ mystical, (Eph. 5:29-32; 1 Cor. 12:12). Now though the open marriage relation between Christ and particular persons takes place at conversion, which is the day of their espousals to him, (Jer. 2:2) and the more public notification of it will be when all the elect of God are gathered in, and shall in one body be as a bride adorned for her husband, and the marriage of the Lamb shall be come; and this declared in the most open manner, and the nuptials solemnized most magnificently (Rev. 21:2). Yet the secret act of betrothing was in eternity, when Christ, being in love with the chosen ones, asked them of his Father to be his spouse and bride; and being given to him, he betrothed them to himself in lovingkindness, and from thenceforward looked on them as standing in such a relation to him; and which is the foundation of all other after acts of grace unto them: hence, because of his marriage relation to his church, he became her surety, and gave himself for her, shed his precious blood to sanctify and cleanse her from all the impurities of the fall, and other transgressions; that he might present her to himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; even just such a church, and in such glory he had viewed her in, when he first betrothed her, (Eph. 5:25-27). Song with the Jews there was a private betrothing before open marriage, and the consummation of it; at which betrothing the relation of husband and wife commenced, (Deut. 22:23, 24) and so Christ is said to be the husband of the Gentile church before she was in actual being (Isa. 54:5). 3. There is a federal union

between Christ and the elect, and they have a covenant subsistence in him as their head and representative. The covenant flows from, and is the effect of the love, grace, and mercy of God; these are spoken of along with it as the foundation of it, (Ps. 89:2, 3, 33, 34; Isa. 54:10) hence it is commonly called the covenant of grace, and this was made from everlasting; Christ was set up as the mediator of it, and his goings forth in it were so early, (Prov. 8:23; Mic. 5:2) eternal life was promised before the world began, and blessings of grace so soon provided, (Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:9) all which proves the antiquity of this covenant, of which more hereafter. Now this covenant was made with Christ not as a single person, but as a common head; not for himself, or on his own account only, but for and on the account of his people; as the covenant of works was made with Adam, as the federal head of all his posterity; hence he is said to be the figure or type of him that was to come, (Rom. 5:14) so the covenant of grace was made with Christ as the federal head of his spiritual offspring; and for this reason a parallel is ran between them in (Rom. 5:1-21; 1 Cor. 15:1-58) as if they had been the only two men in the world, the one called the first, the other the second man. Christ represented his people in this covenant, and they had a representative union to him in it; all that he promised and engaged to do, he promised and engaged in their name and on their account; and when performed it was the same with God, as if it had been done by them; and what he received, promises and blessings of grace, he received in their name, and they received them in him, being one with him as their common head and representative. 4. There is a legal union between Christ and the elect, the bond of which is his suretyship for them, flowing from his strong love and affection to them. In this respect Christ and they are one in the eye of the law, as the bondsman and debtor are one in a legal sense; so that if one of them pays the debt bound for, it is the same as if the other did. Christ is the surety of the better testament; he drew nigh to God, gave his bond, laid himself under obligation to pay the debts of his people, and satisfy for their sins; who being as such accepted of by God, he and they were considered as one; and this is the ground and foundation of his payment of their debts, of his making satisfaction for their sins, of the imputation of their sins to him, and of the imputation of his righteousness to them. In short, it is the saint’s antecedent union and relation to Christ in eternity, in the several views of it in which it has been considered, which is the ground and reason of all that Christ has done and suffered for them, and not for others; and of

all the blessings of grace that are or shall be bestowed upon them, and which are denied to others: the reason why he became incarnate for them, and took upon him human nature with a peculiar regard to them, was because they were children given to him; and why he laid down his life for them, because they were his sheep; and why he gave himself for them, because they were his church; and why he saved them from their sins, because they were his people, (Heb. 2:13, 14; John 10:14, 15; Eph. 5:25; Matthew 1:21). In a word, union to Christ is the first thing, the first blessing of grace flowing from love and effected by it; and hence is the application of all others; “of him are ye in Christ Jesus”, first loved and united to Christ, and then it follows, “who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification, and redemption”, (1 Cor. 1:30). Song Dr. Goodwin observes, that union with Christ is the first fundamental thing of justification and sanctification and all. Christ first takes us, and then sends his Spirit; he apprehends us first; it is not my being regenerate that puts me into a right of all these privileges; but it is Christ takes me, and then gives me his Spirit, faith, holiness,

Chapter 5

OF OTHER ETERNAL AND IMMANENT ACTS IN GOD, PARTICULARLY ADOPTION AND JUSTIFICATION.

I shall not here treat of these as doctrines, in the full extent of them; or as blessings of grace actually bestowed upon, and enjoyed by believers, with all the privileges and advantages arising from thence; or as transient acts passing on them, and terminating in their consciences at believing; but as internal and immanent acts, taken up in the mind of God from eternity, and which abide in his will; in which they have their complete “esse”, or being, as eternal election has, being of the same kind and nature, and are ranked with it as of the same date, and as branches of it (Eph. 1:4-6). In the other view of them they will be considered hereafter in course, in a proper place. I shall begin with,

1. Adoption; as predestination to it stands next to election, (Eph. 1:5) which is no other than his will to adopt the chosen ones, which is his adoption of them; for as the will of God to elect any is his election of them, so his will to adopt the same is his adoption of them; and the complete essence of it lies in his will, and is as such an eternal immanent act of it; in like manner as election is, and may be considered as a branch of it, at least of the same nature with it; and which agrees with the sense of the word “adopto”, from whence adoption comes,

which is compounded of “ad” to, and “opto” to choose; so that adoption is God’s choice or election of some to be his children; and by this option, or choice, of his they become so. The Greek word for adoption throughout the New Testament is *uioGscna*, which signifies “putting among the children”; the phrase used by God (Jer. 3:19). “How shall I put them among the children?” Or a putting one for and in the room of a son, that is a stranger and not a son by birth; a constituting and accounting such an one as a son, according to choice, will, and pleasure: and divine adoption is an act of the sovereign grace and good will of God, (Eph. 1:5) to which he is not induced by any motive out of himself; not by any excellency in the creature; nor for want of a son; one or other of which is the case in human adoptions; as of Moses, a goodly child, by Pharaoh’s daughter; and of Esther, a beautiful person, and a relation by Mordecai; but divine adoption is of persons exceeding unworthy and undeserving, nothing engaging in them; not only strangers, but children of wrath even as others, and like the wretched infant in (Ezek. 16:1-63). It is an act of distinguishing grace; it is of men, and not angels; who are servants and not sons, at least not by adoption; and of some men and not of all, though all are alike in their nature state; and it is a most amazing act of unmerited love and free grace (1 John 3:1). Now this is an eternal act of grace:

First, It did not begin in time, but commenced from eternity; it is an act of God’s will, and has its complete essence in it; and the will of God is eternal, no new will, nor any new act of will, arises in God in time; or otherwise he would not be the unchangeable God he is.

1. It is an act that does not first take place at believing; indeed the saints are “all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus”, openly and manifestatively, (Gal. 3:26) but then it is not faith that makes them children, but what makes them appear to be so; adoption is the act of God, and not of faith; it is God that says, “How shall I put them among the children?” And again, “I will be their Father, and they shall be my sons and daughters”, (Jer. 3:19; 2 Cor. 6:18) it is the work and business of faith to receive the blessing of adoption, which it could not do, unless it had been previously provided in the mind and by the will of God, and in the covenant of his grace; for the reception of which Christ has made way by his redemption, one end of which is “that we might receive the adoption of sons”, (Gal. 4:5) that is, by faith; for God has appointed faith to be the general receiver of Christ, and of all the blessings of grace through him, and this among the rest; and to as many as receive Christ, he gives (*σπουδα*), a power, authority, dignity, and

privilege to become the sons of God openly; that is, to claim this as their privilege and dignity; which claim is made by faith; but not the thing itself claimed; “even to them that believe on his name”, and who are described as regenerate persons; which is an evidence of their sonship, though not the thing itself; “who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but of God” (John 1:12, 13). But though this describes such who are the sons of God openly, and who believe; yet,

2. Adoption does not first commence at regeneration; adoption and regeneration are two distinct blessings, and the one is previous to the other; though they are commonly confounded together by divines. Regeneration is not the foundation of adoption, but adoption the foundation of regeneration; or, the reason why men are adopted, is not because they are regenerated, but they are regenerated because they are adopted. By adoption they are put into the relation of children, and by regeneration they have a nature given them suitable to that relation; and are made partakers of the divine nature, that they may be made known to be heirs apparent to, and to have a meekness for the possession, enjoyment, and use of it, the inheritance in heaven they are adopted to; for,

3. The act of adoption is previous to any work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of his people; “Because ye are sons, sons already, sons by adopting grace; God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts”, both to convince, convert, regenerate, and effectually call by his grace, and sanctify, and also to comfort, and to enable to cry Abba Father, witnessing to their spirits, that they are the children of God; and hence he is called, “the Spirit of Adoption”; and it is his influences, teachings, and leadings, which are the evidences of adoption; “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God”; not that those influences, operations, and leadings, make them, but make them evident to be such, (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:14-16).

4. Divine adoption, or sonship, took place before any work of Christ was wrought in time, for any of the sons of men; it was before his incarnation and birth; forasmuch then, or because “the children are partakers of flesh and blood”, the children of God, who are so by adopting grace; therefore “he also”, Christ, “himself took part of the same”; for though the nature he assumed was what was in common to all mankind, yet he assumed it with a peculiar view to the children of God, the spiritual seed of Abraham; whose nature he is said to take, and for whose sake he was the child born, and the

Son given, (Isa. 9:6; Heb. 2:14, 16) and in consequence they must be the children of God before Christ suffered and died; and, indeed, he suffered and died for them under this character, considered as the children of God by adopting grace; for he died not only for the elect of God among the “Jews, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad”; that is, those who were already the children of God by adopting grace, who were scattered throughout the whole Gentile world. This relates to the gathering of all the elect in one, in Christ, in the dispensation of the fulness of times; when Christ suffered as their Surety, Head, and Representative; and when they were all considered as the children of God, whether in heaven or on earth, and whether among Jews or Gentiles, (Eph. 1:10; John 11:51, 52) and in order to bring these many sons to glory, it became him to be made perfect through sufferings, and that through his redemption of them thereby, they might receive, actually in their own persons, the adoption before provided for them, as before observed; see (Heb. 2:10; Gal. 4:5).

Secondly, Adoption is an act of God’s free grace from all eternity.

1. The elect of God are frequently spoken of as a distinct number of men, given to Christ, and as previous to their coming to him by faith, which is the certain fruit and consequence of that gift; see (John 17:2, 6, 9, 24, 6:37) yea, they were given to Christ before the world was; for if grace was given to them in him before the world began, they themselves must be given to him, and be in him before the world began (2 Tim. 1:9). Now these were given to Christ in the relation of children, and therefore must be children so early; “Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me” (Heb. 2:13).

2. The elect of God were espoused to Christ in eternity; as has been shown in the preceding chapter; which serves to illustrate and prove the relation of sonship to God so early; for as in natural and civil marriage, if a man marries a king’s daughter, he becomes his son in law; as David to Saul: or if a woman marries a king’s son, she becomes the king’s daughter: so the elect of God, his church and people, being espoused to the Son of God, they become the sons and daughters of the Lord God almighty, the King of kings; and hence the church is called the King’s daughter, (Ps. 45:13) and these persons being betrothed to Christ, the Son of God, in eternity, as they were the spouse of Christ, they must be, and must be considered as being the sons of God so early.

3. The elect of God were taken by him into the

covenant of his grace, as children; the sum and substance of which runs thus, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18). Now this covenant was from everlasting; as the setting up of Christ the Mediator of it so soon; and the promises and blessings, made and provided before the world began, do abundantly testify. Besides, in this covenant, these same persons so early were given to Christ, as his seed and offspring, his children, and he commenced the everlasting Father of them (see Isa. 9:6 53:10).

4. Predestination to the adoption of children, is mentioned along with election, as of the same date with it, and as an illustration of it, and as an addition to it, or rather, a branch of it; as men by election are not only chosen to holiness, but to adoption, and the inheritance annexed to it (Eph. 1:4, 5). Adoption is a sentence of grace conceived in the divine mind, and settled by the divine will, and pronounced in divine predestination, which is an eternal act of God; and so says Dr. Ames, "Adoption is a gracious sentence of God - which sentence is pronounced in the same variety of degrees as justification; for it was first pronounced in divine predestination, (Eph. 1:5) afterwards in Christ, (Gal. 4:5) then in believers themselves" (Gal. 4:6). And all these pronunciations, and so all that Christ did in redemption respecting this, or the Spirit of God does in revealing, applying, and witnessing it, yea, all that will be done in eternity to come; for though now the saints "are the sons of God, it doth not yet appear", clearly and fully, "what they shall be", even as sons, or what dignity and glory they shall be raised unto, in consequence of this relation; I say, all these in time, and to eternity, serve only to open and expand the original act of God's will, in appointing and constituting them his sons in an eternity past.

II. Justification is an act of God's grace, flowing from his sovereign good will and pleasure; the elect of God are said to be "justified by his grace"; and as if that expression was not strong enough to set forth the freeness of it, the word "freely" is added elsewhere; "Being justified freely by his grace" (Titus 3:7; Rom. 3:24). Justification is by many divines distinguished into active and passive. Active justification is the act of God; it is God that justifies. Passive justification is the act of God, terminating on the conscience of a believer, commonly called a transient act, passing upon an external object. It is not of this I shall now treat, but of the former; which is an act internal and eternal, taken up in the divine mind from eternity, and is an immanent, abiding one

in it is, as Dr. Ames expresses it, "a sentence conceived in the divine mind, by the decree of justifying." Now, as before observed, as God's will to elect, is the election of his people, so his will to justify them, is the justification of them; as it is an immanent act in God, it is an act of his grace towards them, is wholly without them, entirely resides in the divine mind, and lies in his estimating, accounting, and constituting them righteous, through the righteousness of his Son; and, as such, did not first commence in time, but from eternity.

First, It does not begin to take place in time, or at believing, but is antecedent to any act of faith.

I. Faith is not the cause, but an effect of justification; it is not the cause of it in any sense; it is not the moving cause, that is the free grace of God; "Being justified freely by his grace", (Rom. 3:24) nor the efficient cause of it; "It is God that justifies", (Rom. 8:33) nor the meritorious cause, as some express it; or the matter of it, that is the obedience and blood of Christ, (Rom. 5:9, 19) or the righteousness of Christ, consisting of his active and passive obedience; nor even the instrumental cause; for, as Mr. Baxter himself argues, "If faith is the instrument of our justification, it is the instrument either of God or man; not of man, for justification is God's act; he is the sole Justifier, (Rom. 3:26) man doth not justify himself: nor of God, for it is not God that believes": nor is it a "causa sine qua non", as the case of elect infants shows; it is not in any class of causes whatever; but it is the effect of justification: all men have not faith, and the reason why some do not believe is, because they are none of Christ's sheep; they were not chosen in him, nor justified through him; but justly left in their sins, and so to condemnation; the reason why others believe is, because they are ordained to eternal life, have a justifying righteousness provided for them, and are justified by it, and shall never enter into condemnation: the reason why any are justified, is not because they have faith; but the reason why they have faith, is because they are justified; was there no such blessing of grace as justification of life in Christ, for the sons of men, there would be no such thing as faith in Christ bestowed on them; precious faith is obtained through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 1:1) nor, indeed, would there be any room for it, nor any use of it, if a justifying righteousness was not previously provided. Agreeable to this are the reasonings and assertions of Twisse, Maccovius, and others. Now if faith is not the cause, but the effect of justification; then as every cause is before its effect, and every effect follows its cause, justification must be before faith, and faith must follow justification.

2. **Faith** is the evidence and manifestation of justification, and therefore justification must be before it; "Faith is the evidence of things not seen", (Heb. 11:1) but it is not the evidence of that which as yet is not; what it is an evidence of, must be, and it must exist before it. The "righteousness of God", of the God-man and mediator Jesus Christ, "is revealed from faith to faith", in the everlasting gospel, (Rom. 1:17) and therefore must be before it is revealed, and before faith, to which it is revealed: faith is that grace whereby a soul, having seen its guilt, and its want of righteousness, beholds, in the light of the divine Spirit, a complete righteousness in Christ, renounces its own, lays hold off that, puts it on as a garment, rejoices in it, and glories of it; the Spirit of God witnessing to his spirit, that he is a justified person; and so he is evidently and declaratively "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).

3. Faith adds nothing to the "esse" only to the "bene esse" of justification; it is no part of, nor any ingredient in it; it is a complete act in the eternal mind of God, without the being or consideration of faith, or any foresight of it; a man is as much justified before as after it, in the account of God; and after he does believe, his justification does not depend on his acts of faith; for though "we believe not, yet he abides faithful"; that is, God is faithful to his covenant engagements with his Son, as their Surety, by whose surety-ship righteousness they are justified; but by faith men have a comfortable sense, perception and apprehension of their justification, and enjoy that peace of soul which results from it; it is by that only, under the testimony of the divine Spirit, that they know their interest in it, and can claim it, and so have the comfort of it. But,

4. Justification is the object, and faith the act that is conversant with it. Now every object is prior to the act that is concerned with it; unless when an act gives being to the object, which is not the case here; for faith, as has been seen, is not the cause, nor matter of justification; what the eye is to the body, that is faith to the soul: the eye, by virtue of its visive faculty, beholds sensible objects, but does not produce them; they are before they are seen, and did they not previously exist, the eye could not behold them; the sun is before it is seen; and so in innumerable other instances: faith is to the soul, as the hand is to the body, receives things for its use; but then these things must be before they are received; faith receives the blessing of justification from the Lord, even that righteousness by which it is justified, from the God of its salvation; but then this blessing must exist before

faith can receive it (Ps. 24:5). Christ's righteousness, by which men are justified, is compared to a robe or garment, which faith puts on; but then as a garment must be wrought and completely made, before it is put on, so must the justifying righteousness of Christ be, before it can be put on by faith.

5. All the elect of God were justified in Christ, their Head and Representative, when he rose from the dead, and therefore they believe: Christ engaged as a Surety for all his people from eternity, had their sins imputed to him, and for which he made himself responsible; in the fulness of time he made satisfaction for them by his sufferings and death, and at his resurrection was acquitted and discharged: now as he suffered and died, not as a private, but as a public person, so he rose again, and was justified as such, even as the representative of his people; hence when he rose, they rose with him; and when he was justified, they were justified in him; for he was "delivered for their offences, and was raised again for their justification", (Rom. 4:25; 1 Tim. 3:16) and this is the sense and judgment of many sound and learned divines; as, besides our Sandfords and Dr. Goodwins, the learned Amesius, Hoornbeck, Witsius, and others. But,

Secondly, Justification is not only before faith, but it is from eternity, being an immanent act in the divine mind, and so an internal and eternal one; as may be concluded,

1. From eternal election: the objects of justification are God's elect; "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies"; that is, the elect. Now if God's elect, as such, can have nothing laid to their charge; but are by God acquitted, discharged, and justified; and if they bore this character of elect from eternity, or were chosen in Christ before the world began; then they must be acquitted, discharged and justified so early, so as nothing could be laid to their charge: besides, by electing grace men were put into Christ, and were considered as in him before the foundation of the world; and if they were considered as in him, they must be considered as righteous or unrighteous; not surely as unrighteous, unjustified, and in a state of condemnation; for "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ", (Rom. 8:1) and therefore must be considered as righteous, and so justified: "Justified then we were, says Dr. Goodwin when first elected, though not in our own persons, yet in our Head, as he had our persons then given him, and we came to have a being and an interest in him."

2. Justification may well be considered as a branch

of election; it is no other, as one expresses it, than setting apart the elect alone to be partakers of Christ's righteousness; and a setting apart Christ's righteousness for the elect only; it is mentioned along with election, as of the same date with it; "Wherein", that is, in the grace of God, particularly the electing grace of God, spoken of before, "he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6). What is this acceptance in Christ, but justification in him? And this is expressed as a past act, in the same language as other eternal things be in the context, he "hath" blessed us, and he "hath" chosen us, and "having" predestinated us, so he hath made us accepted; and, indeed, as Christ as always the beloved of God, and well pleasing to him; so all given to him, and in him, were beloved of God, well pleasing to him, and accepted with him, or justified in him from eternity.

3. Justification is one of those spiritual blessings wherewith the elect are blessed in Christ according to election-grace, before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3, 4). That justification is a spiritual blessing none will deny; and if the elect were blessed with all spiritual blessings, then with this; and if thus blessed according to election, or when elected, then before the foundation of the world: and this grace of justification must be no small part of that "grace which was given in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world was" (2 Tim. 1:9). We may say, says Dr. Goodwin, of all spiritual blessings in Christ, what is said of Christ, that his goings forth are from everlasting - in Christ we were blessed with all spiritual blessings, (Eph. 1:3) as we are blessed with all other, so with this also, that we were justified then in Christ!

4. Christ became a Surety for his people from everlasting; engaged to pay their debts, bear their sins, and make satisfaction for them; and was accepted of as such by God his Father, who thenceforward looked at him for payment and satisfaction, and looked at them as discharged, and so they were in his eternal mind; and it is a rule that will hold good, as Maccovius observes, "that as soon as one becomes a surety for another, the other is immediately freed, if the surety be accepted;" which is the case here and it is but a piece of common prudence, when a man has a bad debt, and has good security for it, to look not to the principal debtor, who will never be able to pay him, but to his good bondsman and surety, who is able; and so Dr. Goodwin observes, that God, in the everlasting transaction with Christ, "told him, as it were, that he would look for his debt and satisfaction of him, and that he did let the sinners go free; and so they are in this respect, justified from all

eternity."

5. The everlasting transaction, the same excellent writer thinks, is imported in 2 Corinthians 5:19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them". And the very learned Witsius is of opinion, "that this act of God may be called, the general justification of the elect." And, indeed, since it was the determination of God, and the scheme and method he proposed to take in Christ for the reconciliation of the elect, not to impute their sins to them, but to his Son, their Surety; then seeing they are not imputed to them, but to him; and if reckoned and accounted to him, then not to them; and if charged to him, then they must be discharged from them, and so justified; and a non-imputation of sin to the elect, is no other than a justification of them; and thus the apostle strongly concludes the imputation of Christ's righteousness; which is the "formalis ratio", or the form of justification, from the non-imputation of sin, and the remission of it (Rom. 4:6-8).

6. It was the will of God from everlasting, not to punish sin in the persons of his elect, but to punish it in the person of Christ; and that it was his will not to punish it in his people, but in his Son, is manifest from his setting him forth in his purposes and decrees, to be the propitiation for sin; and from his sending him forth in the likeness of sinful flesh, to condemn sin in the flesh; and from his being made sin and a curse, that his people might be made the righteousness of God in him. Now, as has been often observed, no new will can arise in God; God wills nothing in time, but what he willed from eternity; and if it was the eternal will of God not to punish sin in his people, but in his Son, then they were eternally discharged, acquitted from sin, and secured from everlasting wrath and destruction; and if they were eternally discharged from sin, and freed from punishment, they were eternally justified: Dr. Twisse makes the very quiddity and essence of justification and remission of sin, which he takes to be the same, to lie in the will of God not to punish; and asserts, that this will not to punish, as it is an immanent act, was from eternity.

7. It deserves regard and attention, that the saints under the Old Testament, were justified by the same righteousness of Christ, as those under the New, and that before the sacrifice was offered up, the satisfaction given, and the everlasting righteousness brought in; for Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sins that were past, and his death was for the redemption of transgressions under the first Testament (Rom.

3:25; Heb. 9:15). Now if God could, and actually did, justify some, three or four thousand years before the righteousness of Christ was actually wrought out, taking his Son's word and bond as their Surety, and in a view of his future righteousness; why could he not, and why may it not be thought he did, justify all his elect from eternity, upon the word and bond of their Surety, and on the basis of his future righteousness, which he had engaged to work out, and which he full well knew he would most certainly work out? And if there is no difficulty in conceiving of the one, there can be none in conceiving of the other.

There are many objections made to this truth; some are so trifling as to deserve no notice; a few of the more principal ones I shall briefly answer to, and chiefly those made, for the most part, by the learned Turretine.

1. It is objected, that men cannot be justified before they exist; they must be, before they can be justified; since "*non entis nulla sunt accidentia*", &c. Of a nonentity nothing can be said, nor anything ascribed to it. To which I answer, whatever is in this objection, lies as strongly against eternal election, as against eternal justification; for it may as well be said, how can a man be elected before he exists? he must be before he can be chosen, or be the object of choice. I own, with Maccovius, that this is true of non-entities, that have neither an "*esse actu*", nor an "*esse cognitum*", that have neither an actual being, nor is it certain, nor known that they shall have any future being; but though God's elect have not an actual being from eternity, yet it is certain, by the prescience and predetermination of God, that they shall have one; for "*known unto God are all his works from the beginning*", or from eternity (Acts 15:18). And besides this, they have an "*esse representativum*", a representative being in Christ; which is more than other creatures have, whose future existences are certain; even such a being as makes them capable of being chosen in Christ, and blessed in him before the foundation of the world, and of having grace given them in him before the world was; and why not then of being justified in him? (Eph. 1:3, 4; 2 Tim. 1:9). Moreover, as the same writer observes, "*Justification is a moral act, which does not require the existence of the subject together with it; but it is enough that it shall exist some time or other.*"

2. It is further objected, that if God's elect are justified from eternity, then they were not only justified before they themselves existed, but before any sin was committed by them; and it seems absurd that men should be justified from sins before they were committed, or any charge of them brought against them.

To which may be replied, that it is no more absurd to say, that God's elect were justified from their sins before they were committed, than it is to say, that they were imputed to Christ, and he died for them, and made satisfaction for them before committed; which is most certainly true of all those that live, since the coming and death of Christ: such that believe the doctrines of the imputation of sin to Christ, and of his satisfaction for it, ought never to make this objection; and if they do, they ought to be fully content with the answer. As for the charge of sin against God's elect, that is not first made when brought to the conscience of an awakened sinner; justice brought the charge against all the elect, in the eternal transactions between the Father and the Son; or how came Christ to be bail and Surety for them? Or how otherwise could there be a transfer of the charge from them to Christ? And where is the grace of a non-imputation of sin to them, and of an imputation of it to Christ, if it was not imputable to them, and chargeable on them?

3. It is urged, that strictly and accurately speaking, it cannot be said that justification is eternal, because the decree of justification is one thing, and justification itself another; even as God's will of sanctifying is one thing, and sanctification itself another; wherefore, though the decree of justification is eternal, and precedes faith, that itself is in time, and follows it. To which it may be answered, that as God's decree and will to elect men to everlasting life and salvation, is his election of them; and his will not to impute sin to them, is the non-imputation of it; and his will to impute the righteousness of Christ unto them, is the imputation of it to them; so his decree, or will to justify them, is the justification of them, as that is an immanent act in God; which has its complete essence in his will, as election has; is entirely within himself, and not transient on an external subject, producing any real, physical, inherent change in it, as sanctification is and does; and therefore the case is not alike: it is one thing for God to will to act an act of grace concerning men, another thing to will to work a work of grace in them; in the former case, the will of God is his act of justification; in the latter it is not his act of sanctification; wherefore, though the will of God to justify, is justification itself, that being a complete act in his eternal mind, without men; yet his will to sanctify, is not sanctification, because that is a work wrought in men, and not only requires the actual existence of them but an exertion of powerful and efficacious grace upon them: was justification, as the papists say, by an infusion of inherent righteousness in men, there would be some

strength in the objection; but this is not the case, and therefore there is none in it.

4. It is observed, that the apostle, reckoning up in order, the benefits which flow from the love of God to the elect, in his famous chain of salvation, sets calling before justification, as something antecedent to it, (Rom. 8:30) from whence it is concluded, that calling is in order of time, before justification. To which I reply, that the order of things in scripture is frequently inverted. The Jews have a saying, that there is nothing prior and posterior in the law; that is, that the order of things is not strictly observed; to put that first which is first, and that last which is last; but the order is changed, and therefore nothing strictly can be concluded from thence; even the order of persons in the Trinity is not always kept to, sometimes the Son is placed before the Father, and the Holy Spirit before them both; which, though it may be improved into an argument for their equality, yet not to destroy the order among them; and so with respect to calling, it may be observed, that it is sometimes placed before election, (2 Peter 1:10) but none but an Arminian would argue from thence, that it is really before it in order of time, or that men are not elected until they are called: on the other hand, salvation is placed before calling (2 Tim. 1:9). "Who hath saved us, and called us", &c. From whence we might, with as great propriety, argue, that salvation, and so justification, precedes calling; as to argue, from the other text in Romans, that calling precedes justification, in order of time. Indeed, nothing is to be concluded with certainty, one way or another, from such modes and forms of expression. Justification, as a transient act, and declarative, follows calling; but as an immanent act in God, it goes before it, of which we are only speaking, as ought always to be remembered.

5. It is affirmed, that those various passages of scripture, where we are said to be justified through faith, and by fairly, have no other tendency than to show that faith is something prerequisite to justification, which cannot be said if justification was from eternity. To which the answer is, that those scriptures which speak of justification, through and by faith, do not militate against, nor disprove justification before faith; for though justification by and before faith differ, yet they are not opposite and contradictory. They differ, the one being an immanent act in God; all which sort of acts are eternal, and so before faith; the other being a transient declarative act, terminating on the conscience of the believer; and so is by and through faith, and follows it. But then these do not contradict each other,

the one being a declaration and manifestation of the other. What scriptures may be thought to speak of faith, as a prerequisite to justification, cannot be understood as speaking of it as a prerequisite to the being of justification; for faith has no causal influence upon it, it adds nothing to its being, it is no ingredient in it, it is not the cause nor matter of it; at most, they can only be understood as speaking of faith as a prerequisite to the knowledge and comfort of it, and to a claim of interest in it; and this is readily allowed, that no man is evidentially and declaratively justified until he believes; that is, he cannot have the knowledge of it, nor any comfort from it; nor can he claim his interest in it, without faith; and this being observed, obviates another objection, that if justification is before faith, then faith is needless and useless. It is not so; it is not of use to justify men, which it is never said to do; but it is of use to receive the blessing of justification, and to enjoy the comfort of it.

6. It is asserted, that justification cannot be from eternity, but only in time, when a man actually believes and repents; otherwise it would follow, that he who is justified, and consequently has passed from death to life, and is become a child of God, and an heir of eternal life, abides still in death, and is a child of wrath, because he who is not yet converted, and lies in sin, abides in death, (1 John 3:14) and is of the devil, (1 John 3:8) and in a state of damnation, (Gal. 5:21) but this latter especially cannot be admitted of, with respect to God's elect, even while unconverted. And now, to remove this seeming difficulty, let it be observed, that the elect of God may be considered under two different "heads", Adam and Christ, and as related to two covenants at one and the same time; as they are the descendants of Adam, they are related to him as a covenant head, and as such, sinned in him, and judgment came upon them all to condemnation and death, and so they are, by nature, children of wrath, even as others. But as considered in Christ, they are loved with an everlasting love, chosen in him before the world was, and always viewed and accounted righteous in him, and so secured from everlasting wrath and damnation; hence it is no contradiction to say, that the elect of God, as in Adam, and according to the covenant of works, are under the sentence of condemnation; and that as in Christ, and according to the covenant of grace, and the secret transactions thereof, they are justified, and saved from condemnation. This is no more a contradiction, than that they were loved with an everlasting love, and yet are children of wrath, at one and the same time, as they most certainly are; nor than that Jesus Christ was the

object of his Father's love and wrath at the same time, he sustaining two different capacities, and standing in two different relations, when he suffered in the room and stead of his people; as the Son of God he was always the object of his love; as the Surety of his people, bearing their sins, and suffering for them, he was the object of his wrath, (Ps. 89:38).

7. It is urged what the apostle says (1 Cor. 6:11). "Now ye are justified"; as if they were not justified before; but the word now is not in the text; and was it, and admit that to be the sense of it, it does not follow that they were not justified before: for so they might be "in foro dei", in the court of God, and in his account from eternity, and in Christ their Head and Surety, and especially when he rose from the dead, before now; yet not till now be justified in "foro conscientiae", in their own consciences, and by the Spirit of God; which is the justification the apostle is there speaking of. In a word, the sentence of justification pronounced on Christ, the representative of his people, when he rose from the dead, and that which is pronounced by the Spirit of God in the consciences of believers, and that which will be pronounced before men and angels at the general judgment, are only so many repetitions, or renewed declarations, of that grand original sentence of it, conceived in the mind of God from all eternity; which is the eternal justification pleaded for; and is no other than what many eminent divines of the highest character for learning and judgment, have asserted, as before observed; and it is to such as these Dr. Owen refers, when he replied to Mr. Baxter, who charged him with holding eternal justification; "I neither am, nor ever was of that judgment; though as it may be explained, I know better, wiser, and more learned men than myself, (and he might have added, than Mr. Baxter,) that have been, and are.

Chapter 6

OF THE EVERLASTING COUNCIL BETWEEN THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS, CONCERNING THE SALVATION OF MEN.

Having treated of the internal and immanent acts in the divine mind, and which are eternal; I shall next consider the operations and transactions among the three divine persons when alone, before the world began, or any creature was in being; and which are, chiefly the council and covenant of God, respecting the salvation of men: these are generally blended together by divines; and indeed it is difficult to consider them

distinctly with exactness and precision; but I think they are to be distinguished, and the one to be considered as leading on, and as preparatory and introductory to the other, though both of an eternal date; and shall begin with the council of God, held between the three divine persons, Father, Son and Spirit, concerning the affair of man's salvation before the world was. And it will be proper to enquire.

1. First, In what sense counsel, consultation and deliberation, can be ascribed to God, to the divine persons; and,

a. This is not to be understood as expressive of any want of knowledge, or of the least degree of ignorance in God, or of his being at a loss in forming the scheme of salvation; since he is a God of knowledge, of all knowledge, is perfect in knowledge, wanting nothing; is the only wise and all-wise God, whose understanding is infinite, and reaches to all things, and nothing can escape it: want of knowledge is often the case with men, and therefore they deliberate with themselves, and consult with others; but it is not so with God; wherefore,

b. Consultation in him is not in order to gain more knowledge, or to obtain more satisfaction, and so more pleasure in the review of things; for since his understanding is infinite, there can be no accession to it, nor increase of knowledge in it: men consult with themselves, and reason on things in their own minds, or consult with others to gain more knowledge; and if this is not the result of it, yet it gives them satisfaction and pleasure, when those they have an high opinion of agree with them, and approve of their schemes; this makes their minds more easy, and confirms and settles them; and thus in the multitude of counsellors there is safety and delight (see Prov. 11:14, 27:9). Nor,

c. Does a council held between the three divine persons suppose any inequality between them; usually indeed with men, in matters of moment and difficulty, persons supposed to be of superior abilities are consulted, and their judgment taken; as Ahithophel by David, and the Israelites, whose counsel with them was as the oracles of God; but this is not to be supposed here, when the Father consults with the Son and Spirit, it is not because they have knowledge superior to him, or that he needs any information from them; they are one in nature; and are equal in knowledge and understanding; the Father is omniscient, the Son knows all things, and the Spirit searches the deep things of God; and yet may consult together; and three persons of equal knowledge and judgment among men may consult together about an affair of importance, without supposing any superiority

and inferiority in them. I d. Nor is consultation in God continued, carried on and protracted to any length, as it often is with men, who when they have a matter of difficulty before them, do not suddenly and at once determine; but take time and consider it in every point of view, that they may fix on the wisest and most rational method of acting; consultations on an affair have been sometimes held many days successively; but so it is not with God, counsel with him is as quick as thought, yea, it is no other than his thought, and therefore they go together (Ps. 33:11). But,

Idl. When consultation about the salvation of man is ascribed to God, it is intended to express the importance of it; not things trifling, but those of importance, are what men consult about and deliberate upon; such is the work of mens salvation of the greatest moment, not only to men, to their comfort and happiness here and hereafter, but to the glory of God; the glory of all whose perfections is greatly displayed in it, being so wisely contrived as it is for that purpose; wherefore it is not put upon any footing; nor into any hands, but into the hands of the Son of God (Ps. 21:5; John 17:4).

Id2. This way of speaking is used to set forth the wisdom of God displayed herein; schemes, which are the fruit of consultation and deliberation, are generally the most wisely formed, and best succeed: in the scheme of salvation by Christ, God has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; it is the manifold wisdom of God, in which that is displayed in the greatest fulness and variety; insomuch that angels, those wise and knowing creatures, desire to look more and more into it (Eph. 1:7, 8, 3:10). Id3. This being the effect of a council between the three divine persons, shows their unanimity in it; as they are one in nature, so they agree in one; and as in everything, so in this, the salvation of men; the Father signified his mind that his Son should be sent to be the Saviour of men, when he may be supposed to put such a question as in Isaiah 6:8. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The Son, knowing his Father's will, and assenting to it, declared his agreement with it, "Here am I, send me"; and the Spirit approving of the Father's motion, and the Son's consent, joined with the divine Father in the mission of him; "Now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me", (Isa. 48:16) and what inexpressible pleasure must such unanimity give to a believing soul, to declare which is the design of the divine consultation. These things being observed, I shall endeavour,

2. Secondly, To give some proof that there was a council between the divine persons concerning the

salvation of men.

2a. An argument in favour of this may be drawn from the purpose of God; all whose purposes are called his counsels because they are founded in the highest wisdom, (Isa. 25:1) now the purpose of God respecting the salvation of men, is the basis and foundation of the council held concerning it, in which purpose, as well as council, all the three persons are concerned; for the scheme of salvation, which is, "the manifold wisdom of God, is according to the eternal purpose which he" (God the Father) "purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord", (Eph. 3:10, 11) and the Son was not only privy to this purpose or counsel, and agreed to it; but the Spirit also, who searches "the deep things of God", and approves of them, which are no other than the purposes and counsels of his heart (1 Cor. 2:10).

2b. It appears there was a consultation held about the salvation of men from the gospel, which is an exhibition and declaration of the scheme of salvation, being called the counsel of God, (Acts 20:27) and the wisdom of God, the hidden wisdom ordained before the world, (1 Cor. 2:6) for it is no other indeed than a transcript of the council and covenant of grace; the sum and substance of the word and ministry of reconciliation, is that eternal transaction between God and Christ concerning it, which the apostle thus expresses; God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses (2 Cor. 5:19).

2c. It may be reasonably concluded, from the consultation had between the divine Persons, concerning the formation of man, thus expressed, "And God said, Let us make man in our image"; which was said, not to angels, but to the other two divine Persons, the Son and Spirit; and it is not necessary to understand the words as spoken the moment, or immediately before the creation of man, but as spoken in eternity, in council between the divine Persons; for it may be rendered, "God had said"; and, indeed, God had determined on this in the decree of election; for as in the decree of the end, he chose some of the creatures his power could make, to be happy with him, for his own glory; so in the decree of the means, he resolved on the creation of them; as has been before observed; however, be it, that this consultation was immediately before the creation of man, as all the three Persons were concerned in that, and in his creation; it may be reasonably argued, that if there was a consultation of the divine Persons about the making of man at first, then much more about the redemption and salvation of him. But,

2d. What would put this matter out of all doubt, is

the sense of a passage in Zechariah 6:13 as given by some learned men, if it can be established; "And the counsel of peace shall be between them both": some, indeed, interpret it of the Kingly and Priestly offices meeting in Christ, and of the unanimity of them in him; since it is before said, "He shall be a priest upon the throne"; but it seems rather to respect persons and things. Others have thought of Zerubbabel the prince, and Joshua the high priest, who were unanimously agreed in building the second temple: but an edifice of another kind, and of a spiritual nature, the church of God, seems to be intended, the building of which is ascribed to a single Person only. Rather by the "counsel of peace", may be meant the gospel, called the counsel of God, and the gospel of peace, which was to be, and has been among Jews and Gentiles, preached to them, both as to them that are nigh, so to them afar off, as in Zechariah 6:15 and which was a means of making peace between them, and reconciling them together, (Eph. 2:17, 6:15) and in this sense of the words I formerly acquiesced: but there is another sense of them embraced by learned men, to whose judgment I pay a great deference; such as Heidegger, De Dieu, Cocceius, Witsius, Dr. Owen, and others, that this respects the council concerning the peace and reconciliation in eternity, between Jehovah and the Branch, between the Father and the Son, who in time was to become man. My objections to this sense have been that this council in eternity was between the three Persons, and not two only; and that is what is past; whereas this is spoken of as future: but when I consider that Jehovah and the Branch are the only Persons mentioned in the text, and so could only, with propriety, be spoken of, though the council was between the three; and that, in the Hebrew language, tenses are frequently put for one another, the past for the future, and so the future for the past; and things are said to be, when they appear to be, though they are before; the sense may be, that when the Man, the Branch, should grow out of his place, and build the temple, and bear the glory, and sit a priest on his throne, then it should clearly appear, that there had been a council of peace between them both, which was the ground and foundation of all: and in this light, this sense of the passage may be admitted, and so be a proof of the point under consideration. But if this is not the truth of this text; yet,

2e. That there has been such a transaction between the Father and the Son, which, with propriety enough, may be called the "counsel of peace", we have sufficient warrant from 2 Corinthians 5:19. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their

trespasses"; by the "world" is meant the elect of God, he so loved, as to send his Son to be the Saviour of, and for the life of whom Christ gave his flesh, (John 3:16, 6:51) and about the peace and reconciliation of those, or in what way to make peace and atonement for them, God was in Christ, or with Christ, consulting, contriving, and planning the scheme of it; which was this, not to impute their sins unto them, but to Christ, now called to be the Saviour of them; and this contains the sum of what we mean by the council of peace. I proceed,

3. Thirdly, To observe, that the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, and they only, were concerned in this council. 3a. Not angels, for they were not then in being, they were not made till the heavens were. But this council was before the heavens and the earth were made; and besides, the angels are the creatures of God, his ministering spirits, and therefore he would never consult with them; they knew nothing of this transaction until it was revealed unto them: and when it was, many of them, as some think, were offended at it, left their habitation, and apostatised from God; not being able to endure it, that the Son of God, in human nature, should be their Head, and so that nature be advanced above theirs, which they perceived by this step would be the case: and as for those that stood and kept their first estate, they were so far from assisting in this council, that they were entirely unacquainted with it, until it was made known unto them; and when it was, though they highly approved of it, their knowledge of it seemed to be imperfect; since they desire to look more and more into it, and "even do" learn of the church the manifold wisdom of God in it (1 Peter 1:12; Eph. 3:10).

3b. Nor were men a party in this council; "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:34) not any of the sons of men; for these also were not then in being, and when they were, were but creatures, and soon became sinful ones, and destitute of true wisdom and knowledge, and so unfit to be of such a council, had it been in time; and had God summoned all the individuals of human nature together, and proposed it to them, that if they could find out a way how they could be saved, consistent with his divine perfections, he would willingly save them; after ever so long a time allowed them for consultation about it; and even if they had the assistance of all the angels in heaven, they must have returned an "ignoramus", and owned they knew not any. No, none but the blessed Three in One were of this council, and fit to be of it; the thing consulted about was "nodus Deo vindice dignus", worthy only of God.

3bl. Jehovah the Father, the first Person in order of nature, though not of time, may reasonably be supposed to give the lead in this affair, and proposed the thing to be debated and advised about; he who, concerning the creation of man, proposed it to the other two Persons, might, with great propriety, move for a consultation about his salvation: who is the Ancient of days, with whom is wisdom, and who hath counsel and understanding, yea, is wonderful in counsel, as well as excellent in working; and so infinitely fit to conduct an affair of this nature (Job 12:12, 13; Isa. 28:29).

3b2. Jehovah the Son, has the same wisdom, counsel, and understanding his Father has; for all that he hath are his; nor does Christ think it any robbery to be equal with him; he is wisdom itself, or “wisdoms”, he is possessed of the most consummate wisdom; in him, even as Mediator, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; and he himself says, “Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom”, (Prov. 1:20, 8:14; Col. 2:3) yea, he is called “the Wonderful, Counsellor”, (Isa. 9:6) which not only respects his capacity and ability to give the best counsel and advice to men, as he does, but to assist in the council of God himself; and so the “Septuagint” interpreters understood that passage, rendering it, “the Angel of the great council”; whereby it seems as if those Jews then had a notion of this great transaction, and of the concern of the Messiah in it; to whom the whole verse belongs: to which may be added, that Christ the Son of God, was as one brought up with his divine Father, lay in his bosom, was privy to his designs, and must be in his council, and was on all accounts fit for it.

3b3. The Holy Spirit had a concern in this council, and was fit to be of it; Epiphanius says, as the Son is the Angel of the great council, so is the Holy Spirit; he is not only the Spirit of wisdom to men, and by whom is given to them, to one the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge; and therefore must be possessed of the most perfect wisdom and knowledge himself, (Eph. 1:17; 1 Cor. 12:8) but he is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and of counsel and knowledge, to and resting on Christ as Mediator, (Isa. 11:2) and therefore must be a very proper Person to be concerned with the Father and the Son, in this great council; for never was such a council held as this, between such Persons, and on such a momentous and interesting affair. Which, 4. Fourthly, Is next to be considered more particularly and distinctly. Now the affair consulted about, was not the salvation of men merely; nor who should be the persons that should be saved with it; for both that was resolved on, and the persons fixed on who were to enjoy it, in the

decree of election, which stands firm and sure on the unalterable will of God; but who should be the Saviour, or be the author of this salvation; and a proper person for this work, could never have been devised, found out, and settled upon, by men and angels; this was the business of this great council. By the decree of election the vessels of mercy were prepared for glory, or were ordained to eternal life, God resolved to have mercy on them, and save them; but who should be the saviour, was referred to this council to agree upon; it is true, indeed, that this was, in some respect, involved and included in the Father’s purpose, according to election, who appointed some, not unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Thess. 5:9) but then, though this was in the Father’s purpose, it was necessary that the will of the Son should be expressed, and his approbation and consent had; for which this council was called and held. The case stands thus: it was in Jehovah the Father’s thoughts, to save men by his Son; he in his infinite wisdom saw he was the fittest person for this work, and, in his own mind, chose him to it; and this is meant by laying help on One that is mighty, exalting one chosen from among the people; finding David his servant, and anointing him with his holy oil (Ps. 89:19, 20). Now in the eternal council he moved it, and proposed it to his Son, as the most advisable step that could be taken, to bring about the designed salvation; who readily agreed to it, and said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God”, (Heb. 10:7) from Psalm 40:7, 8 and the Holy Spirit expressed his approbation of him, as the fittest person to be the Saviour, by joining with the Father in the mission of him, as before observed; and by forming his human nature in time, and filling it with his gifts and graces without measure. The pleasure and satisfaction the three divine Persons had in this affair, thus advised to, consulted, and approved of, is most clearly to be seen and observed at our Lord’s baptism (Matthew 3:16, 17). But not only it was in this council consulted, who should be the Author of salvation; but also in what way and manner it should be effected, both for the security of men, and for the display of the glory of the divine perfections. Now it should be observed, that the elect of God, the persons to be saved, were considered in this transaction as fallen creatures, which salvation by Christ supposes; as sinners in Adam, on whom judgment came unto condemnation, as obnoxious to the curses of the righteous law, and to the resentments of divine justice; and therefore satisfaction must be made to the law and justice of God, the law must be fulfilled, and justice satisfied, by an atonement made; this was signified to the

Saviour found, who approved of it, as a most fit thing to be done; hence God is gracious, and saith, “Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom”, (Job 33:24) this was found by infinite wisdom in this council; and whereas this ransom, satisfaction, and atonement, must be made by obeying the precepts of the law, and by the suffering of death, the penalty of it; this the law required of the transgressor of it; “Thou shalt surely die”; and so of the Surety for him; wherefore, since it was necessary that the Captain and Author of salvation, in bringing many sons to glory, should be made perfect through sufferings; it was proper that he should assume a nature in which he would be capable of obeying and suffering, even a nature of the same kind with that which sinned; this was notified in council to the Son of God, and he approved of it as right and fit, and said, “A body hast thou prepared me”, a whole human nature, in purpose; and now in council, signified he was ready to assume it in time. Moreover, it was seen proper and advisable, that the human nature assumed, should be holy and pure from sin, that it might be offered up without spot to God; and be a sacrifice to take away sin, which it could not be, if sinful; now here a difficulty arises, how such a nature could be come at, since human nature would be defiled by the sin of Adam; and who would be able to bring a clean thing out of an unclean? This difficulty infinite wisdom surmounts, by proposing that the Saviour should be born of a virgin; that this individual nature to be assumed, should not descend from Adam by ordinary generation, but be formed in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghost; and this was approved in council, by both the Son and Spirit, since the one readily assumed this nature in this way, and the other formed it. Once more, it appeared necessary that this nature should be taken up into personal union with the Son of God; or, that the Saviour should be God and man in one person; that he should be man, that he might have somewhat to offer, and thereby make reconciliation for the sins of the people; and that he should be God, to give virtue to his deeds and sufferings, to make them effectual to the purposes of them, and he be a fit Mediator, a days-man between God and men, and take care of the things belonging to both. In short, the affair debated and consulted between the three divine persons, was the peace and reconciliation of God’s elect by Christ, and the way and manner of doing it; and therefore, as before observed, this transaction may, with great propriety, be called, the council of peace; and which issued in a covenant of peace, next to be considered; in this council

everything relative to it was advised, consulted, and contrived; and in the covenant the whole was adjusted and settled; and therefore I have considered the council as the preparation and introduction to the covenant.

Chapter 7

OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE, BETWEEN THE FATHER, AND THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The council before treated of, is the basis and foundation of the Covenant of grace, and both relate to the same thing, and in which the same persons are concerned. In the former, things were contrived, planned, and advised; in the latter, fixed and settled. The covenant of grace is a compact or agreement made from all eternity among the divine Persons, more especially between the Father and the Son, concerning the salvation of the elect. For the better understanding these federal transactions between them, before the world was, when there were no creatures, neither angels nor men in being; and which lay the foundation of all the grace and glory, comfort and happiness, of the saints in time and to eternity; it may be proper to consider,

1. The etymology and signification of the words used for “covenant”, in the writings of the Old and New Testament, by which it will appear with what propriety these transactions may be called a “covenant”. The books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew, and the Hebrew word for “covenant”, throughout those writings is כְּפָר “Berith”; which, by different persons, is derived from different roots. There are a set of men lately risen up, who derive the word from בָּרַר “Barar”, which signifies, to “purify”; and because the word we translate “make”, which usually goes along with “covenant”, signifies, to “cut off”, they warmly contend, that wherever we meet with this phrase, it should be rendered, “cut off the Purifier” by whom they understand the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, though it will be allowed, that Christ is sometimes called a Refiner and Purifier, (Mai. 3:3) yet not by any word or name derived from this root; nor is it likely, that a “Purifier”, or “he that purifies”, should be expressed by a noun feminine, as “Berith” is; and not by a noun masculine, or a participle belonging to this root; and though such a version of the phrase may happen to suit tolerably well with a passage or two; yet there are many places in which, were it so rendered, no sense could be made of them. If the word has the signification of purity, as a word of the same letters, though differently pointed has, being twice translated “soap”, (Jer. 2:22; Mai. 3:2) which is of a detersive,

cleansing, and purifying nature. Rather as this is used for covenant, it may denote the purity of intention, and sincerity of heart, that ought to be in all persons that enter into covenant with each other; and which is most eminently true of the pure and holy divine persons, in their covenant engagements. But the word “Berith, covenant”, may rather be derived, as it more commonly is, either from בר “Bara”; which, in the first sense of the word, signifies to “create”; a covenant being made with man, as soon almost as he was created, which covenant he transgressed, (Hosea 6:7) but the covenant of grace was made before the creation of man; though it was first made manifest quickly after his fall, which was not long after his creation; the sum and substance of which lies in those words, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head” (Gen. 3:15). The word, in a secondary sense, may signify, to order or dispose of things; as in creation things were disposed and put in an orderly manner, and with this may agree, the words אֶפְסָרְנָם, and אֶפְסָרְנָם, used of a covenant in the New Testament, which signify, a disposing of things in a covenant or testamentary way. It is further observed by some, that the same Hebrew word, in another conjugation, signifies to “cut” in pieces and divide, and think that a covenant has its name from hence, because it was usual at making covenants, to slay creatures for sacrifice, and cut them in pieces, and lay them by each other, and the covenanters to pass between them; of which rite (see Gen. 15:9, 10, 17; Jer. 34:18) to which way of making a covenant by sacrifice, the allusion may be in Psalm 50:5. Or else the word may be derived from בָּרַח “Barah”; which, among other things, signifies to “eat” food; it being usual, when covenants were made and confirmed, for the parties covenanting, to eat and feast together; as did Abimelech and Isaac, Laban and Jacob, (Gen. 26:30, 31:46) and it may be observed, that the Lord’s Supper, which is a feast, is a commemoration of the ratification of the covenant of grace, by the blood of Christ, and wherein and whereby the faith of God’s people is strengthened and confirmed, as to their interest in it. But after all, it may be best to derive the word from this root, as it signifies to select and choose, and the rather, since all those roots, בָּרַח, בָּרַח, בָּרַח have this signification; and which well agrees with a covenant, into which persons, of their own will and choice, enter; choose the persons to be concerned with them, the terms and conditions on which they covenant with each other, and the things and persons they covenant about; all which entirely agrees with this federal transaction, or covenant of grace we are about to treat of. The word used in the

New Testament for “covenant”, is בְּרִית, by which word the Septuagint interpreters almost always translate the Hebrew word “berith” in the Old, and comes from a word which signifies to “dispose”, and that in a covenant way, as in Luke 22:29, where the Father is said to appoint, or dispose, by covenant, a kingdom to his Son, as he also is said to appoint, or dispose by covenant, a kingdom to his people; and the word from it, is used for a covenant in (Acts 3:25) and in other places; and sometimes for a testament, or a man’s last will, (Heb. 9:16, 17) and we shall see the use of the word in this sense hereafter, as it may be applicable to the covenant of grace; the word signifies both covenant and testament, and some have called it a covenant testament, or a testamentary covenant; hence the different administrations of the covenant of grace in time, are called the first and second, the Old and New Testament; and even the books of scripture, written under those different dispensations, are so distinguished (see Heb. 8:1-13; 2 Cor. 3:6, 14). In the next place it may not be improper to observe, 2. In what sense the word “covenant” is used in scripture, which may serve to lead into the nature of it. And,

a. It is sometimes used for an ordinance, precept, and command; so the order for giving the heave offerings to the sons of Aaron, is called a covenant of salt, a perpetual ordinance, (Num. 18:19) the law for releasing servants after six years service, has the name of a covenant, (Jer. 34:13, 14) and this may account for the Decalogue, or Ten Commands, being called a covenant, (Deut. 4:13) for whatsoever God enjoins men, they are under an obligation to observe, nor have they a right to refuse obedience to it; and, indeed, the covenant of works made with Adam, was much of the same nature, only he had a will, consenting to obey, the bias of it being to the will of God, as well as power to perform.

b. A covenant, when ascribed to God, is often nothing more than a mere promise; “This is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit that is upon thee”, &c. (Isa. 59:21) hence we read of “covenants of promise”, or promissory covenants, (Eph. 2:12) and, indeed, the covenant of grace, with respect to the elect, is nothing else but a free promise of eternal life and salvation by Jesus Christ, which includes all other promises of blessings of grace in it; “This is the promise that he hath promised us”, the grand comprehensive promise, “even eternal life”, (1 John 2:25) and which is absolute and unconditional, with respect to them; whatever condition is in that covenant, lay only on Christ to perform; he and his work are the only condition of it. And so,

c. We often read of covenants of God only on one

side; of this kind is his covenant of the day and of the night, (Jer. 33:20) which is no other than a promise that these should always continue, without requiring any condition on the part of the creature, (Gen. 8:22) and the covenant he made with Noah and his posterity, and with every living creature, with which latter especially, there could be no restipulation, (Gen. 9:9-17) and so the covenant he promised to make for his, people, with the beasts of the field, could be no other than a mere promise of security from harm by them (Hosea 2:18). But,

d. A covenant properly made between man and man, is by stipulation and restipulation, in which they make mutual promises, or conditions, to be performed by them; whether to maintain friendship among themselves, and to strengthen themselves against their common enemies, or to do mutual service to each other, and to their respective posterities; such was the confederacy between Abraham, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; and the covenant between Abimelech and Isaac, and between David and Jonathan (Gen. 14:13, 26:28; 1 Sam. 20:15, 16, 42, 23:18). Now,

e. Such a covenant, properly speaking, cannot be made between God and man; for what can man restipulate with God, which is in his power to do or give to him, and which God has not a prior right unto? God may, indeed, condescend to promise that to man, which otherwise he is not bound to give; and he may require of man, that which he has no right to refuse, and God has a right unto, without making any such promise; and therefore, properly speaking, all this cannot formally constitute a covenant, which is to be entered into of free choice on both sides; and especially such a covenant cannot take place in fallen man, who has neither inclination of will to yield the obedience required, nor power to perform it. But,

f. The covenant of grace made between God and Christ, and with the elect in him, as their Head and Representative, is a proper covenant, consisting of stipulation and restipulation; God the Father in it stipulates with his Son, that he shall do such and such work and service, on condition of which he promises to confer such and such honours and benefits on him, and on the elect in him; and Christ the Son of God restipulates and agrees to do all that is proposed and prescribed, and, upon performance, expects and claims the fulfilment of the promises: in this compact there are mutual engagements each party enters into, stipulate and restipulate about, which make a proper formal covenant (see Isa. 49:1-6, 53:10-12; Ps. 40:6-8; John

17:4, 5). Which passages of scripture will be produced, and more fully opened hereafter.

3. The names and epithets given to this federal transaction, or covenant of grace, between the Father and Son, both in the scriptures and among men, may deserve some notice, since they may help to give a better and clearer idea of this transaction.

a. It is called, “a covenant of life”, (Mai. 2:5) for though it is said of Levi, yet of him as a type of Christ; and if the covenant with Levi might be so called, much more that with Christ. Some divines call the covenant of works, made with Adam, a covenant of life, and so it may be; but then only as it respected that natural happy life Adam then lived, and as it contained a promise of continuance of it, and confirmation in it, should he stand the trial of his obedience; but not a promise of eternal life and happiness, such as the saints enjoy in heaven; for such a life was never designed to be given by, nor could come through a covenant of works (see Gal. 3:21). But the covenant of grace contains such a promise, a promise that was made by God, that cannot lie, before the world was; that is, a promise made to Christ, in the covenant of grace, from eternity, who then existed as the federal Head of his people, to whom it was made, and in whose hands it is put for them; he asked life of his Father for them in this covenant, and he gave it to him, even length of days for ever and ever; and therefore with great propriety may this covenant be called, a covenant of life (see Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:1; Ps. 21:4).

b. It is called “a covenant of peace” (Mai. 2:5, Isa. 54:10). As the transaction between the eternal Three, in which the plan and method of the peace and reconciliation of God’s elect was consulted, may be called “the council of peace”; because that was a principal article considered in it; so, for the same reason, the covenant may be called the covenant of peace; for what was concerted in the council of peace concerning it, was fixed and settled in the covenant: as, that the Son of God, in human nature, should be the Peace Maker, and should make peace by the shedding of his blood; and hence, in the fulness of time, he was sent to be the Man, the Peace, according to promise and prophecy, founded upon this covenant, (Mic. 5:2, 5) and had the “chastisement of peace” laid upon him; that is, the punishment for the sins of the elect inflicted on him, whereby their peace and reconciliation was made, (Isa. 53:6) all which was by his own consent, and in consequence of the covenant made between him and his Father, and which, therefore, is rightly called “the covenant of peace”.

c. It is commonly called by men, “the covenant of grace”; and properly enough, since it entirely flows from, and has its foundation in the grace of God: it is owing to the everlasting love and free favour of God the Father, that he proposed a covenant of this kind to his Son; and it is owing to the grace of the Son, that he so freely and voluntarily entered into engagements with his Father; the matter, sum, and substance of it is grace; it consists of grants and blessings of grace to the elect in Christ; and the ultimate end and design of it is the glory of the grace of God.

d. It is by some divines called, “the covenant of redemption”; and very truly, because the redemption of God’s elect is a principal article in it: the Father proposed to the Son, that he should raise up, restore, redeem Israel, his chosen ones; the Son agreed to it, and hence he was declared and promised, and expected as the Redeemer, long before he came into this world to do this service; Job knew him as his living Redeemer, and all the Old Testament saints waited for him as such, having had a promise of it, which was founded on this covenant agreement; for as it was proposed to him, and he agreed to it, to be the Redeemer, so it was promised him, that upon the condition of giving himself, the redemption and ransom price for the elect, they should be delivered from all their sins, and the effects of them, and out of the hands of all their enemies; see (Isa. 49:5, 59:20; Job 33:24). But then,

e. This covenant is the same with the covenant of grace; some divines, indeed, make them distinct covenants; the covenant of redemption, they say, was made with Christ in eternity; the covenant of grace with the elect, or with believers, in time: but this is very wrongly said; there is but one covenant of grace, and not two, in which the Head and Members, the Redeemer and the persons to be redeemed, Christ and the elect, are concerned; in which he is the Head and Representative of them, acts for them, and on their behalf. What is called a covenant of redemption, is a covenant of grace, arising from the grace of the Father, who proposed to his Son to be the Redeemer, and from the grace of the Son, who agreed to be so; and even the honours proposed to the Son in this covenant, redounded to the advantage of the elect; and the sum and substance of the everlasting covenant made with Christ, is the salvation and eternal happiness of the chosen ones; all the blessings and grants of grace to them, are secured in that eternal compact; for they were blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and had grace given them in him before the world was; wherefore there can be no

foundation for such a distinction between a covenant of redemption in eternity, and a covenant of grace in time.

4. The contracting parties concerned in this covenant, are next to be considered more particularly and distinctly. This covenant is commonly represented as if it was only between the Father and the Son; but I see not why the Holy Spirit should be excluded, since he is certainly promised in it both to Head and members; and in consequence of it, is sent down into the hearts of God’s covenant ones, to make application of the blessings, promises, and grace of the covenant to them, and to work a work of grace in them; all which must be by agreement, and with his consent; and I think there are some traces, and some footsteps of all the three Persons, as concerned in it, in the dispensation and manifestation of this covenant to the people of Israel (Hag. 2:4,5). However, as in all covenants the contracting parties are,

a. Distinct from each other, so in this; a covenant is not of one, but of more than one; no man covenants with himself; at least such a covenant is not properly one; Job is, indeed, said to make a covenant with his eyes, (Job 31:1) but that was no other than a resolution within himself to lay a restraint upon his eyes, not to make use of them in such a manner as might tend to sin. The divine Persons of the sacred Trinity are distinct Persons, as has been proved in the article on that subject. And so they appear to be in their federal transactions with each other. He that called his Son to service, and directed him, or proposed the work he should do, “to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel”, &c. (Isa. 49:3, 5, 6) must be distinct from him to whom he proposed all this; and he who in compliance with it said, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God!” (Ps. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:7) must be distinct from him whose will he was so ready to do, and whom he calls his Lord and God, as he was, by virtue of his covenant relation to him: and the Spirit, who was sent by them both, in consequence of a covenant agreement, to be the Comforter of the covenant ones, must be distinct from either.

b. As they are distinct Persons, so they have distinct acts of will; for though their nature and essence is but one, which is common to them all, and so their will but one; yet there are distinct acts of this will, put forth by and peculiar to each distinct Person: thus their nature being the same, their understanding must be the same; and yet there are distinct acts of the divine, understanding, peculiar to each Person; the Father knows the Son, and the Son knows the Father, and they have a distinct knowledge and understanding of one another, and the Spirit knows them both, and they know him. And as

their nature and essence, so their affections are the same; and yet there are distinct acts of them, peculiar to each Person; the Father loves the Son, and has put all things into his hands; the Son loves the Father, and is in all things obedient to him; the Spirit loves the Father and the Son, and they both love him: so their will, though the same, there are distinct acts of it, peculiar to each Person; and which appear in their covenanting with each other, and are necessary to it: there is the Father's distinct act of will notified in the covenant, that it is his will and pleasure his Son should be the Saviour of the chosen ones; and there is the Son's distinct act of will notified in the same covenant, he presenting himself, and declaring himself willing, and engaging himself to be the Saviour of them; which distinct acts of the divine will thus notified, formally constituted a covenant between them; and as the holy Spirit dispenses his gifts and grace, the blessings of this covenant, "severally as he will", (1 Cor. 12:11) this is pursuant to an agreement, to a notification of his will in covenant also.

c. These contracting Parties entered into covenant freely and voluntarily, of their own choice, as all covenantors do, or should; hence the Hebrew word for covenant, as has been observed, comes from a root, which signifies to choose; because men choose their own terms and conditions, on which they agree to enter into covenant with each other, not being compelled and forced thereunto. So it is in this everlasting covenant, the Parties were at entire liberty to enter or not into it: the Father was under no necessity, nor under any obligation to save men; he could, in consistence with his justice, and the other perfections of his nature, have destroyed the whole world of men, as he destroyed all the angels that sinned; he was not obliged to make a covenant with his Son to save them; it was of his own choice he did it; who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy: nor was the Son compelled to enter into this covenant; but knowing his Father's will, and agreeing to it, voluntarily engaged in it, and said, "Lo, I come to do thy will": and as the Spirit freely bestows his grace, and the gifts of it in time, so he freely engaged to do it in the covenant in eternity.

d. What they agreed in covenant, was what was in their power to perform; if one man enters into a covenant with another, and agrees to do what is not in his power, and which he knows it is not, when he enters into covenant, this is a fraud and an imposition on him, with whom he covenants; and in course the covenant is null and void. But the contracting parties in the covenant of grace, are able to perform whatever

they covenanted about: the Father is able to make good all that he has promised in it, either to his Son or to the elect in him; and the Son is able to do the work he engaged to do; he had power to assume human nature into union with his divine Person, and to lay down his life in that nature, having such a power over his own life, and to dispose of it at pleasure, as no mere man ever had; and so being God, as well as man, was able to work out the salvation of his people, which he undertook; the Father knew he was able to save them, and therefore laid help on him, and called him to this work; and he knew himself to be equal to it, and therefore engaged in it: and the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of power and might, and so able to perform the part he took in this covenant.

e. As in all covenants, however, the persons covenanting may be equal in other respects, yet in covenanting there is an inequality and subordination; especially in covenants, in which there is service and work to be done on one side, and a reward to be given in consideration of it on the other; of which nature is the covenant of grace and redemption; and though the contracting parties in it are equal in nature, perfections, and glory, yet in this covenant relation they voluntarily entered into, there is by agreement and consent a subordination; hence the Father, the first Person and Party contracting is called by his Son, his Lord and his God, a phrase always expressive of covenant relation; (see Ps. 16:2, 22:1, 40:8, 45:7; John 20:17) and the Son, the second Person and Party contracting, is called by the Father his Servant; "Thou art my Servant", &c. (Isa. 49:3) hence the Father is said to be "greater than he", (John 14:28) not merely on account of his human nature, about which there could be no difficulty in admitting it; but with respect to his covenant relation to him, and the office capacity he has taken and sustains in it: and the Spirit, the third Person and contracting Party, he is said to be sent both by the Father and the Son, to perform that part which he undertook in it: and this economy and dispensation of the covenant, thus settled in subordination among themselves by agreement and consent, is done with great propriety, beauty, and decency, suitable to their natural relations they bear to each other, as equal divine Persons for who so proper to be the proposer of terms in the covenant, to direct and prescribe them, and to exercise a kind of authority, as he who is the first Person in order of nature, and that stands in the relation of a Father to the second Person; and since here was work and service to be done, the salvation of the elect, and that in an inferior nature, in human nature, who so proper to engage in this service,

and to assume this nature, and in it yield obedience to the will of God, than the second Person, who stood in the relation of a Son to the First? And with what congruity is the third Person, the Holy Spirit, sent by both, to make application of the grace of both; who is said to be their Breath, and to proceed from both.

f. As in all covenants some advantages are proposed unto, and expected by all parties concerned, so in this; as God's end in all things, in nature, providence, and grace, is his own glory, so it is in this covenant, even the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit; which must be understood not of any addition unto, or increase of their essential glory, but of the manifestation of it; otherwise, as Christ is represented saying to his Father, "My goodness extendeth not to thee"; thou art not the better for my surety-ship engagements in covenant, and the performance of them; thou hast no real profit and advantage thereby; no new accession of glory and happiness accrues to thee by it; but the real profit and advantage resulting from hence is, "to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight" (Ps. 16:2, 3). As for the glory promised to Christ, and which he expected and pleaded on his finishing his work, (John 17:4, 5) this was either the manifestation of the glory of his divine Person, hid in his state of humiliation; or his glory as Mediator, his kingdom and glory, as such appointed to him, and promised him, upon the performance of his engagements, (Luke 22:29; 1 Peter 1:21; Heb. 2:9) of which more hereafter; and yet, even the benefit of this redounds to the advantage of God's elect, (John 17:22, 24) it is their salvation and happiness that is the grand thing in view in these covenant transactions; this is "all my salvation" (2 Sam. 23:5). As the sum of the gospel, which is no other than a transcript of the covenant of grace, is the salvation of lost sinners by Christ; so the covenant, of which that is a copy, chiefly respects that, and that is the result of it: hence Christ, the Covenantee, has the name of Jesus, because he undertook to save, and came to save, and has saved his people from their sins, in consequence of his covenant engagements.

Chapter 8

OF THE PART WHICH THE FATHER TAKES IN THE COVENANT.

The various parts which each contracting Party take in this covenant, are next to be considered. The Father, the first person in the Trinity, takes the first place, and gives the lead in this covenant. "All things are of God", that is, of God the Father; they are of him originally,

they begin with him; all things in creation; he has made the world, and created all things by his Son; and so all things in the salvation of men, "who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ"; he set on foot the council of peace, and so the covenant of peace, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"; that is, God the Father; he planned the reconciliation of men in council, and proposed it in covenant, and settled it with the other two persons; and he is not only the proposer, but the prescriber and enjoiner of things in the covenant; he both proposed the work to be done, and took upon him the authority, by agreement, to prescribe and enjoin it: hence we read of the injunctions and commands laid on Christ with respect to his discharge of his office, as the mediator of this covenant, (John 10:18, 12:49, 14:31) it was the Father that called Christ from the womb of eternity to be his servant, and directed and enjoined his work and service, as appears from (Isa. 49:1- 6) and promised a reward to him on condition of his performing the service, and to bestow benefits on the elect in him, and for his sake. And let us,

1. First, Consider the work he proposed to Christ, which is the great and only condition of the covenant, and which he prescribed and enjoined him to do; which was, 1a. To take the care and charge of the chosen ones; these, as he chose them in him, he put them into his hands, not only as his property, but for their safety; and here they are safe, for none can pluck them out of his hands; hence they are called "the sheep of his hand", not only because they are guided by his hand as a flock, but because they are under his care and custody; they were not only given him as his portion and inheritance, but to be kept and saved by him; when they were committed to him, he had this charge given to him by his Father, that "of all" that he had "given" him he "should lose nothing", not anyone of them; they were told into his hands, and the full tale of them was expected to be returned: and which respects the whole of them, as their souls which he has redeemed, and does preserve, so their bodies likewise; for the injunction was that he "should lose nothing", no part of them, not even their dust in their graves, "but should raise it up again at the last day", (John 6:39) as he will. God not only made a reserve of them in Christ for himself, but they were preserved in him, and therefore are called the "preserved of Israel", (Jude 1:1; Isa. 49:6) and that Christ, in a covenant way, by his own consent, was laid under such an obligation to keep and preserve the elect safe to glory, appears from his own account, both from what he says in his intercessory prayer; "those that thou gavest me, I have

kept, and none of them is lost”, (John 17:12) and from what he will say at the last day, when they are all brought in; “Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me”, (Heb. 2:13) all kept safe, and presented faultless; the kingdom of priests, the whole number of the chosen vessels of salvation, will be delivered up complete and perfect, agreeable to the charge committed to him, and his own voluntary undertakings.

lb. Whereas these same Persons made his care and charge, would fall in Adam, with the rest of mankind, and that into a state of sin and misery, and under the curse and condemnation of the law, he proposed it to him, and enjoined it as his will, that he should redeem them from all this; and hence agreeing to it, he was sent to do it, and has done it; this work, as proposed and prescribed in the covenant of grace, is expressed by various phrases, in (Isa. 49:5, 6) as by “bringing Jacob again to him”; by Jacob is meant the elect of God, especially among the Jews, the remnant according to the election of grace: and “bringing” them “again”, supposes they were gone aside, apostatized from God, and turned their backs on him, and were gone out of the right way, gone astray, and become lost sheep: and the work of Christ, as enjoined him in covenant, and he undertook, was to bring them unto God, and set them before him, to use Judah’s words, when he offered to be surety for Benjamin, (Gen. 43:9) to bring them nigh to God; which he has done, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, (Eph. 2:13; 1 Peter 3:18) and also this work of Christ is expressed by “raising up the tribes of Jacob”; meaning the same persons sunk into a low estate through the fall, into an horrible pit, into the mire and clay, into a pit wherein is no water: out of this low estate Christ was to raise them, as he did, by the blood of the covenant, and made them kings and priests unto God; and likewise by “restoring the preserved of Israel”, even the same chosen ones, among the people of Israel; who, by the fall, lost their righteousness, and forfeited their happy life in innocence; these Christ was to recover from their fallen sinful estate, and restore them, as he has done, to a better righteousness, and to a life more abundant than what they lost, to an higher state of grace, glory, and happiness: and if this should be thought by Christ to be too “light” and too “low” a thing for him to be the Saviour of the elect among the Jews; it is farther proposed, that he should be “the light of the Gentiles”, and “the salvation” of God “unto the end of the earth”, be the Saviour of all God’s elect, both among Jews and Gentiles; not only to die for his people among the Jews, but to bring again, raise up, restore, and

gather together the children of God, scattered abroad throughout the whole world; and be the propitiation, not for the sins of the chosen among the Jews only, but of those in the whole world of the Gentiles; so that this takes in the whole work of redemption and salvation, the work which Christ’s Father gave him to do, and which he undertook, and has finished, (John 17:4) and with respect to the Gentiles, as well as Jews, our Lord says, “Other sheep I have” to take care of, to lay down his life for, besides those among the Jews, “which are not of this fold”, of the Jewish church state, but out of it; the Gentiles, them also I must bring, bring them again, raise up, and restore, and set before his Father; bring them into his church, and among his people, into an open state of grace, and to eternal glory; and this he says he must do, because his Father enjoined it, and he agreed to do it.

lc. In order to this, the Father proposed to the Son to assume human nature in the fulness of time, which was necessary to the work of redeeming the chosen people; as this was advised to in council, it was fixed in the covenant; “A body hast thou prepared me”, (Heb. 10:5) not only in the purposes and decrees of God, in the book of which “all the members of it were written, which, in continuance, were fashioned, when, as yet, there was none of them”, before they were in actual being, (Ps. 139:16) nor only in the prophesies of the Old Testament, in which it was foretold and promised, that the Messiah should become man, be the child born, and born of a virgin, and that the Man, the Branch, should grow up out of his place; but this was provided in covenant, not an human body only, nor an human soul only, but the whole human nature; which, though it had not a real and actual, yet had a covenant subsistence, as it may be called; that is to say, the Father proposing it, and the Son assenting, as he did, by the above words; there was an agreement, a compact between them, that he should take into union with himself, a true body, and a reasonable soul; both which were necessary, to suffer the whole curse of the law; a true body, in which he might get his bread by the sweat of his brow, and suffer pains, sorrows, and death; bear the sins of many in it, and be offered up for them; and a reasonable soul, that he might endure the punishment of loss and sense; of loss, in being deprived for a while of the gracious presence of God, as when on the cross; of sense, in feeling the wrath poured into his soul, which made it exceeding sorrowful, as in the garden. And this nature proposed to be assumed, and was assumed, is of the same kind with that which sinned, and to which death was threatened,

as it seems proper it should; the same flesh and blood with the children, and in which he was made like unto his brethren, excepting sin; and to assume such a nature was necessary, that Christ might have somewhat to offer, that would be acceptable to God, and satisfactory to his justice; this was part of the will of God enjoined in covenant, and which Christ agreed to do; that whereas ceremonial sacrifices would be disapproved of by him, as insufficient to take away sin, he would assume the body, or human nature, prepared and provided in covenant for him, and offer it up, that sin might be condemned, and the righteousness of the law be fulfilled; for it is “by this will”, or the doing of it, that “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”, (Heb. 10:5-10) and this being the will of the Father, what he proposed and prescribed to be done; hence he is always represented as concerned in this affair: he promised to bring forth his Servant the Branch, the Man the Branch, that should grow out of its place; and he sent his Son, in the fulness of time, made of a woman, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Zech. 3:8, 6:12; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4). I d. Another branch of the work assigned to Christ, in the covenant, by his Father, and to which he agreed, was to obey the law in the room and stead of his people; to which Christ has respect when he says, “thy law is within my heart”, or I am heartily willing and ready to obey and fulfil it; and which designs not only the law of mediation, or the command enjoined Christ as Mediator, with respect to the performance of his several offices as such: so with respect to his prophetic office Christ says, “The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak- whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak” (John 12:49, 50). And with respect to his priestly office, his laying down his life for his people; “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; this commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:18, 14:31). And with respect to his Kingly office; “I will declare the decree”; that is, of his Father, the ordinance, statute, law, and rule of governing his people; for this refers not to what follows concerning the generation of Christ, but to what goes before, concerning his Kingly office: but also the moral law, which he agreed to be made under, and was willing to fulfil, and for which he came into the world, and did become the fulfilling end of it, whereby he magnified it, and made it honourable; as it became him to do, as the Surety of his people, and which was necessary to their justification; for “by the obedience of

One, many are made righteous” (Rom. 5:19). I e. Another part of the work proposed to him, and enjoined him by his Father, was to suffer the penalty of the law, death; which must be endured, either by the sinner himself, the transgressor of the law, or by his Surety, (Gen. 2:17) wherefore it became the wise, holy, and righteous Being, “for whom, and by whom, are all things - to make the Captain of salvation”, his Son, whom he appointed to be the Saviour of men, perfect through sufferings, for the satisfaction of law and justice; and therefore he enjoined him to bear them, (Heb. 2:10) hence Christ says, speaking of laying down his life for the sheep, “This commandment have I received of my Father”, (John 10:18) and hence his sufferings are called, “the cup” which his Father had given him; not just then put into his hands, for he spake of it long before, as what he was to drink of; but was what was ordered him in the everlasting covenant, (John 18:11; Matthew 20:22) and hence also they are spoken of by all the prophets from the beginning of the world: and this being the Father’s will in covenant, hence likewise it is that the Father had so great an hand in them, as to bruise him and put him to grief, to awake the sword of justice against him, and smite him; not to spare him, but deliver him up by his determinate counsel, into the hands of wicked men, and to death itself; and the covenant having somewhat of the nature of a testament, or of a man’s last will, there was a necessity of the death of the testator to ratify and confirm it; which was to be done by the blood of Christ, called therefore, the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 9:15-17, 13:20). I f. When the Father signified in covenant, his dislike of the continuance of legal sacrifices, as insufficient to take away sin; he strongly suggested it was his will that his Son should become a sacrifice for it, and therefore prepared him a body, or human nature, in the covenant, capable of being offered up; and it was by his will expressed therein, that his covenant people are sanctified through the offering up of the body of Christ (Heb. 10:5-10). This is the great condition of the covenant, and on which all the blessings of it depend: “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin”, or rather, “When his soul shall make an offering for sin”; that is, when he shall heartily and willingly offer up himself, soul and body, a sacrifice for sin, then the benefits following should be conferred both on Christ, and on his spiritual seed (Isa. 53:10-12). And, I g. Farther, it was the will of the Father, in the covenant, that Christ should hereby make atonement for the sins of the chosen ones; this was the work which was assigned him in covenant, and

is marked out in prophecy for him to do; namely, "To finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity", (Dan. 9:24) and as he agreed to do it, for this purpose he became man, and by his bloodshed, sufferings, and death, has made it; which lays a foundation of solid joy in his people, (Heb. 2:17, 9:26, 10:14; Rom. 5:10, 11).

lh. In close connection with the former, his work assigned him in covenant was, to bring in everlasting righteousness, for the justification of the elect. God the Father in covenant, "called him in righteousness", or "to righteousness", to work out a righteousness for his people, commensurate to the demands of law and justice; and this call and proposal he answered and agreed to; hence the church of old could say, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength"; and by virtue of the surety-ship righteousness of Christ, and his engagements in covenant, all the Old Testament saints were justified, (Isa. 42:6, 45:24, 25).

li. Lastly, The work which the Father proposed to, and prescribed to the Son was, "to feed the flock of slaughter"; to which he replied, "I will feed the flock of slaughter"; even all the elect of God, (Zech. 11:4, 7) and this feeding the flock committed to his charge, takes in his whole work as a shepherd; taking care of his sheep, laying down his life for them, gathering the lambs in his arms, carrying them in his bosom, gently leading those with young, protecting them from all harms and enemies, bringing them into his fold here and above, setting them at his right hand, and introducing them into his kingdom and glory. This is the work that was before him; and his reward was with him, next to be observed (Isa. 40:10, 11). 2. Secondly, On condition of Christ's engaging to do the above work proposed and prescribed to him, the Father promised in the covenant many things; some to him personally, and others to the elect, whom he represented and represented in it.

2a. Some things to himself, respecting his work, assistance in it, &c. A glory on the nature in which he should do it, the honourable offices he should be invested with in it, and the numerous offspring he should have.

2a 1. As the work assigned him was to be done in human nature, which needed qualifications for it, strength to do it, help and assistance in it, support under it, preservation from enemies, and encouragement of success: all this was promised him, that as his human nature should be formed by the Holy Ghost without sin, so it should be filled with his gifts and graces; that the Spirit should be put upon him, and rest on him, as a Spirit of wisdom, counsel, might, knowledge, and of the

fear of God, whereby he would be qualified to execute his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, (Isa. 11:1, 2, 42:1, 61:1) and which was bestowed upon him without measure, (Ps. 45:7; John 3:34) and that whereas the human nature, in which this work was to be done, would be attended with weakness, with all the sinless infirmities of human nature, as it was at last crucified through weakness; God promised to strengthen him, and he believed he would be his strength, and, accordingly, he was the Man of his right hand, whom he made strong for himself, (Ps. 89:21; Isa. 49:5; Ps. 80:17) and that, as he would need help and assistance in that nature, it was promised him, and he expected it, asked for it, and had it, (Ps. 22:1, 19; Isa. 50:7, 8, 49:8) and as it would want support, under the mighty load of sin, and sense of wrath, that it might not sink under it, this was promised and granted; so that he failed not, nor was he discouraged or broken, (Isa. 42:1, 4) and as it would have many enemies, who would seek to take its life away before its time; God promised that he would keep and preserve him, and hide him in the shadow of his hand, and in his quiver, and so secure him, as he did from Herod, and the wicked Jews, (Isa. 42:6, 49:2, 6) and since he would be treated with great contempt in that nature, be despised by men, abhorred by the nation of the Jews, and be a servant of rulers; he was told, for his encouragement, that the Lord would choose him, and express delight and pleasure in him as his elect: and though disallowed of men, would be chosen of God, and precious, (Isa. 42:1, 49:7) and accordingly, delight and well pleasedness in him were expressed by his Father, when both obeying and suffering, (Matthew 3:17; John 10:17) yea, success in his work was promised him, that "the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand"; that is, the work of the Lord be succeeded, which it was his will and pleasure to put into his hand. Now all this was promised him in covenant, as an encouragement to engage in this work. 2a2. As he was to do and suffer much in his human nature, so it was promised him, that he should have a very great glory conferred on him in that nature; not only that the glory of his Deity should be manifested and displayed, which was hid, especially from many, during his state of humiliation; for which, when he had done his work, he may be thought to pray, pleading a promise made to him, (John 17:4, 5). But there was a glory to be put on his human nature, which was promised in the everlasting covenant, and which he had with his Father, in promise, before the world was; hence the prophecies of the Old Testament, which are founded on covenant engagements, speak, as of the

sufferings of Christ, so of the glory that should follow, and of Christ's entering through sorrows and sufferings, into his kingdom and glory; and Christ believed and expected that he should be "glorious", notwithstanding all his meanness in a state of humiliation, (Isa. 49:5; Luke 24:26) particularly it was promised him, that though he should die and be laid in the grave, yet that he should not lie so long as to see corruption, but be raised again the third day, as he was, and so had the glory given him, and which he had faith and hope of, (Ps. 16:9-11; 1 Peter 1:21) as also, that he should ascend to heaven, and receive gifts for men, or in man, in human nature; and accordingly he did ascend above all heavens, to fill all things, and gave the gifts to men he received, and that in a very extraordinary manner; whereby it appeared he was glorified, as was promised him, because the Spirit was not given in such a plentiful manner till Jesus was glorified, exalted at the right hand of God, and made and declared Lord and Christ (Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:8-10; John 7:39; Acts 2:32, 36). Moreover, it was promised him, that in human nature he should sit at the right hand of God; a glory and honour which none of the angels was ever admitted to; but, in consideration of his obedience, sufferings, and death, he was highly exalted, as it was promised he should, and a name given him above every name; being placed on the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto him! (Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:13; Phil. 2:7-9; 1 Peter 3:22) and now he is seen crowned with glory and honour, and will come a second time in his own glory, and in his Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels, all according to the covenant agreement. In a word, it was promised him in covenant: on condition of making his soul an offering for sin, among other things, that God would "divide him a portion with the great"; give him as large and ample a portion, yea, a larger one, than any of the great men of the earth: that he would make him his firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth: and that he should "divide the spoil with the strong", or take the prey out of the hands of the mighty, and deliver the lawful captive; which spoil and prey being taken out of the hands of the strong, should be his portion and inheritance; and that because he poured out his soul unto death, was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sins of many (Isa. 53:12). 2a3. As an encouragement to Christ to engage in the above work proposed to him in covenant, it was promised him, that he should be invested with, and sustain several honourable offices, which he should execute in human nature; as, that he

should be the great Prophet of the church; not only "the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God" to the Jews, but be "for a light of the Gentiles"; which is twice promised, where plain traces of this everlasting covenant are to be seen, (Isa. 42:6, 49:6) and he accordingly was expected to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as to be the glory of the people of Israel, (Luke 2:32) and he was so, by the ministry of his apostles, in the Gentile world, and still is, by the preaching of his ministers in it; whereby men are turned from darkness to light, and to show forth the praises of him who has called them out of the one to the other (1 Peter 2:9; Eph. 2:17; Acts 26:18). It was also promised, and swore to by an oath in covenant, that he should be a Priest; an honour which no man takes to himself, but he that is called to it, as was Aaron; even Christ glorified not himself, to be called an High Priest; but his Father, who invested him with this office, by an oath, to show the immutability of it; and that he should continue in it, and be a priest on his throne (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:4, 5, 7:21; Zech. 6:13). Likewise, that he should be King of Zion, of saints, over his church and people, and have a kingdom very large, from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth; of which government, and the increase of it, there should be no end; a dispensatory kingdom, besides that of nature and providence, which he had a right to, as a divine Person; but this is a kingdom disposed of to him in covenant and by promise; "I appoint unto you a kingdom", says Christ, "as my Father hath appointed me", כִּי אֶפְרָא, has disposed of or appointed in covenant to me (Luke 22:29). Once more, God has appointed him in covenant to be the judge of quick and dead; and has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he has ordained; and accordingly, he has committed all judgment to him, that all men should honour him as they honour the Father, (Acts 10:42; 17:31; John 5:22, 23). 2a4. In consequence of fulfilling the condition of the covenant, engaging to do, and doing the above work proposed in it; it was promised to Christ, that he should "see his seed, and prolong his days", (Isa. 53:10) that is, that he should have a spiritual offspring, a seed that should serve him, and be accounted to him for a generation; that he should be an everlasting Father to them, and they be his everlasting children; that as the first Adam was the common parent, and federal head of all his posterity, who sinning, conveyed sin and death to them; so the second Adam becomes the Father and federal Head of a spiritual offspring, and conveys grace, righteousness, and life unto them: it was promised him, that this seed of his should be numerous, and continue

long; yea, that these children should endure for ever, and his throne be as the days of heaven; and that these should be his portion, and his inheritance; not only the elect among the Jews, but those among the Gentiles also; and therefore he was bid to ask of his Father in covenant, and he would “give” him “the heathen for his inheritance”, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; which accordingly he asked, and has, and is well pleased with his portion, and says, the lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and he has a goodly heritage, (Isa. 9:6; Ps. 22:30, 89:29, 36, 2:8, 16:6) yea, it was promised him, that all persons and things should be put into his hands, to subserve his mediatorial interest, and the good of his spiritual seed, his covenant people; even all the wicked of the earth, whom he disposes of as he pleases, and rules with a rod of iron: he is given to be an Head over all things to the church; for its preservation and security; and has power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him; and accordingly all things are put into his hand, and all creatures are at his dispose; all power in heaven and in earth is given unto him, so that he can order and appoint whatsoever he pleases for the good of his people (Ps. 2:9; Eph. 1:22; John 17:2, 3:35; Matthew 28:18).

2b. There are other things which God the Father promised in covenant, respecting the elect, the persons for whom Christ was a covenantee, and whom he represented in the covenant, and for whose sake he was to do all the work proposed to him, and which he undertook. And,

2bl. It was promised, that upon Christ’s engaging in, and performing the work of redemption, they should be delivered out of that state of misery sin brought them into, even out of the pit wherein is no water, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, (Zech. 9:11) that they should be redeemed from all their iniquities, original and actual, which should be cast behind God’s back, and into the depths of the sea, never to be seen and remembered more to their condemnation, (Ps. 130:8) that they should be ransomed from the hand of Satan, stronger than they, and the prey be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered, (Jer. 31:11; Isa. 49:24, 25) that they should be freed from the law, its curse and condemnation, Christ being made a curse for them, and sin condemned in his flesh, (Rom. 8:1, 3, 33; Gal. 3:13) and that they should be secured from hell, wrath, ruin, and everlasting destruction their sins deserved (Job 33:24).

2b2. That upon the faithful discharge of his office, as

a Servant, particularly in bearing the sins of his people, they should be openly justified and acquitted; that his righteousness he would bring in, should be made known unto them, and received by faith; and so they should be manifestatively, and in their own consciences, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (Isa. 53:11; 1 Cor. 6:11; Ezek. 36:25).

2b3. That all their iniquities should be forgiven them, for Christ’s sake, and their sins and transgressions be remembered no more. This is a special and particular article in the covenant, to which all the prophets bear witness (Jer. 31:34; Acts 10:43).

2b4. That they should be openly adopted, and declared the children of God, and be dealt with as such; that God should be their God, their Father, their Portion, and Inheritance; and they should be his people, his children, and heirs of him, and be treated as such by him; as they would be when chastised for their sins, the rod being provided for them in covenant, as well as their inheritance (Jer. 32:38; 2 Cor. 6:18; Ps. 89:30, 34; Heb. 12:7).

2b5. That they should be regenerated, their hearts spiritually circumcised to love the Lord, and his fear put into them, and be made willing in the day of his power upon them, to be saved by him, and to serve him, (De 30:6; Jer. 32:39; Ps. 110:3) that they should be made new creatures, have new hearts and new spirits put within them, in which are new principles of light, life, and love, grace and holiness, joy, peace, and comfort; that the stony heart should be taken out of them, the hardness and impenitence of it removed, and an heart of flesh given them, soft, penitent, and contrite; or, in other words, that true, spiritual, evangelical repentance for sin should be granted to them (Ezek. 36:26).

2b6. That they should have knowledge of God, as their covenant God and Father; even the least, as well as the greatest, be all taught of God, as his children, and so believe in Christ; for those that hear and learn of the Father, come to Christ; that is, believe in him (Jer. 31:34; Isa. 54:13; John 6:45). So that repentance and faith are not terms and conditions of the covenant, but are free grace gifts granted, and blessings of grace promised in the covenant, and are as sure to the covenant people, as any other blessings whatever, (Acts 11:18; 5:31; Eph. 2:8).

2b7. It is another promise in this covenant, that the law of God should be put into their inward parts, and written on their hearts; that they should have a spiritual knowledge of it, and a cordial respect unto it, a real delight in it, and serve it with their minds and spirits,

and yield a constant, ready, and cheerful obedience to it, (Jer. 31:33; Rom. 7:22, 25) as well as by the epistles of Christ, and have the law of faith, or doctrine of the gospel, take place in their hearts, and dwell richly in them, and they yield a professed subjection to it.

2b8. It is further promised by the Lord, in this covenant, that whereas they are weak and strengthless, and unable to do any thing spiritually good of themselves, that he will put his Spirit within them, who should work in them both to will and to do; and strengthen them with strength in the inward man, and enable them to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, and do them, (Ezek. 36:27) so that likewise new spiritual and evangelical obedience, both to law and gospel, is no term and condition of the covenant, but a blessing secured in it, which absolutely provides with grace and strength to perform it. 2b9. Another article in this covenant, respecting the chosen and covenant people, is, that they shall persevere in grace, in faith, and holiness, to the end; this is absolutely promised in it, and the faithfulness of God is engaged to perform it; "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" (Jer. 31:40; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24). 2b10. Glory, as well as grace, is promised in this covenant; and to whom God gives the one, he gives the other; eternal life was promised before the world began; and the promise of it was made unto Christ in the everlasting covenant, and put into his hands for his people; and it is represented as if it was the only promise in it, being the grand, principal, and comprehensive one; "This is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life", (Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:1; 1 John 2:25) hence our Lord, in an authoritative way, as it were, demands the glorification of ALL the Father has given him, and he undertook for in covenant, (John 17:24).

Chapter 9

OF THE PART THE SON OF GOD, THE SECOND PERSON, HAS TAKEN IN THE COVENANT.

The part which the Son of God takes, and the place and office he has in the covenant of grace, are next to be considered. Christ has so great a concern in the covenant, that he is said to be the Covenant itself; "I will give thee for a Covenant of the people", (Isa. 42:6, 49:8) his work, that which was proposed to him, and he agreed to do, is, as has been observed, the grand condition of the covenant, and he himself is the great blessing of it; he is the Alpha and the Omega, as of the scriptures, so of the covenant of grace; he is the

first and the last in it, the sum and substance of it; he is everything, ALL in ALL in it; all the blessings of it are the sure mercies of him, who is David, and David's Son; he is prevented with all the blessings of goodness, and the covenant people are blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, as their covenant head; all the promises are made to him, and are all yea and amen in him; he sustains various characters and offices in the covenant. He is the representative Head of his people in it; he is the Mediator, Surety, Testator, and Messenger of it; of all which, more particularly and distinctly hereafter. At present I shall only observe Christ's assent to his Father's proposals, his acceptance of them, and open declaration of his readiness and willingness to act according to them, which formally constitute the covenant and compact between them; his consent thereunto is fully expressed in Psalm 40:6-8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering, and sin offering, hast thou not required. Then said I Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God! yea, thy law is within my heart". Which words, though spoken and written by David, yet as representing the Messiah, as is certain from the application of them to him by the apostle, in (Heb. 10:5-10) according to whom, the time when these words were spoken, was when "he cometh into the world", that is, at his incarnation, when he came from heaven to earth, by the assumption of human nature, to do the will and work of his Father, which he proposed unto him; then he said all the above in fact, what he had before said in word, in promise; "Lo, I come to do thy will"; for that this was said before is plain, since it was known to David, in his time, and written by him, as the penman of the Holy Ghost, and as representing Christ, and was repeated and confirmed by Christ at his coming into the world: and when could it be said before, but in the covenant of grace? Likewise it appears, that this was said on the account of the insufficiency of legal sacrifices to atone for sin; in proof of which the apostle quotes the words, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin"; wherefore he saith, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not", &c. That is, though they were the institutions and appointment of God, yet he would not have them continued any longer than the coming of Christ, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of them to take away sin, and because they were to have, and had, their accomplishment in him; in the fore views of which this was said in David's time, and earlier by Christ, in the covenant of grace; in which, knowing his Father's will concerning sacrifices,

and their continuance, as well as the insufficiency of them, freely declared that he was ready to come, in the fulness of time, and give himself an offering for sin; as his Father had proposed to him he should (Isa. 53:10). This assent and consent of his is first more obscurely and figuratively expressed; “Mine ears hast thou opened”, digged or bored; expressive of his great attention, hearkening and listening with great diligence, to what his Father proposed to him; see (Isa. 50:4, 5) and of his ready and cheerful obedience to his Father’s will, signified thereby: the phrase seems to be used in allusion to the boring the servant’s ear, who cared not to quit his master’s house, but was willing to serve him for ever, (Ex. 21:5, 6) the Septuagint, and so the apostle render the words, “A body hast thou prepared me”; a part being put for the whole; and which is supposed; for the ear could not be opened, unless a body was prepared; by which is meant, not a part, but the whole of the human nature, soul and body; prepared, not only in the purposes and decrees of God, but in the covenant of grace, where it had a covenant subsistence, by the joint agreement of the divine Persons; for as the Father proposed it to the Son, that he should have such a nature, he agreed to assume it, and therefore takes up these words, to show his ready assent to it; “A body hast thou prepared me”; as it is thy pleasure I should have one, I am ready to take it, at a proper time; that I might have something to offer, an offering of more avail, and more acceptable, than the legal ones. This acceptance of his Father’s proposals is more clearly and fully expressed; “Lo, I come to do thy will”; that is, to assume human nature, to lay down his life in it, to suffer death, make atonement for the sins of his people, and obtain their redemption and salvation: his willingness to do all this freely, and without compulsion; he himself, and not another, and immediately, as soon as ever it should be necessary; he declares, with a note of admiration, attention, and asseveration; and his heartiness in it is still more fully signified, by saying, “I delight to do thy will”; it was with the utmost pleasure and complacency that he complied with it, and it would be his meat and drink, as it was, to do it: and it is added; “Yea, thy law is within my heart”; it is in my heart to fulfil it; I am ready to yield a cordial and cheerful obedience to it. Now all this was “written” concerning him “in the volume of the book”; not of the scriptures in general only, nor of the Pentateuch in particular, the only volume extant in David’s time, sv כְּסֵפֶת הַסֵּפֶר, at the head and beginning of which is a declaration of the grace, will, and work of Christ, (Gen. 3:15) nor only of the book of God’s

purposes, (Ps. 139:16) but of the covenant; alluding to the writing, signing, and sealing of covenants; the covenant at Sinai is called, the book of the covenant (Ex. 24:8). Now in this volume, or book, as the Father’s proposal is there written and contained, so is the Son’s assent unto it, and acceptance of it. Add to all this, that the Character in which Christ here addresses his divine Father, “My God”, is a phrase expressive of covenant relation, and is frequently so used both with regard to Christ and his people. But, to observe no more, nothing more fully proves Christ’s free and full assent and consent to do the will of his Father, proposed in covenant, than his actual performance of it. Was it his will that he should take the care and charge of all his elect, and lose none? He has done it (John 17:12). Was it his will that he should assume human nature? The Word has been made flesh, and dwelt among men (John 1:14). Was it his will that he should obey the law? He is become the end of the law for righteousness (Rom. 10:4). Was it his will that he should suffer death, the penalty of it? He has suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God (1 Peter 3:18). Was it his will that he should make himself an offering for sin? He has given himself to God, an Offering and a Sacrifice, of a sweet smelling savour (Eph. 5:2). In a word, Was it his will that he should redeem his people from all their iniquities? Yes, he has obtained an eternal redemption of them (Heb. 9:12).

Chapter 10

OF CHRIST, AS THE COVENANT HEAD OF THE ELECT

There are various characters, relations, and offices, which Christ sustains in the covenant of grace; among which, that of a federal Head is one: Christ is often said to be the “Head of the Church”; not of any particular congregation of saints, in this or the other part of the world; but of the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, even of all the elect of God, that..... ever have been, are, or will be in the world, (Eph. 1:22, 23, 5:23; Col. 1:18) and he is a Head to them in different senses; he is that to them as a natural head is to a natural body, and the members of it; which is if the same nature with it, superior to it, communicates life, sense, and motion to it, as well as overlooks and protects it; such an Head of influence is Christ to the church, the source of life to it, from whom nourishment is derived, and all the supplies of grace, (Eph. 4:15, 16; Col. 2:19). He is an Head in a political sense, as a captain general is head of his army, and a king is head of his subjects, (Judg. 10:18, 11:11; Hosea 1:11) and in

an economical sense, as the husband is the head of the wife, and a father the head of his children, and a master the head of his servants and of his whole family (Num. 1:4; Eph. 5:23, 24; Isa. 9:6; Matthew 23:10). The headship of Christ in these several senses, chiefly belongs to his Kingly office; but besides these, he is the representative head of his church, or of all the elect of God; they were all considered in him, and represented by him, when he covenanted with his Father for them; all that he engaged to do and suffer, was not only on their account, but in their name and stead; and all that he received, promises and blessings, were not only for them, but he received them as representing them. As Christ was given to be the covenant of the people, so to be an Head of them in it (Eph. 1:22). And thus, 1.

1. Christ was considered in election; he was chosen as Head, and his people as members in him, and so they had union to him, and a representative being in him before the world began; they did not then personally exist, but Christ did, who represented them, and therefore were capable of being chosen in him, as they were (Eph. 1:4).

2. Such a relation Christ stood in to them in the covenant, that was made, not with him alone, but with all the elect of God, considered in him as their head and representative; hence we read of “the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ”; which was of God made sure and firm with his covenant people, in Christ, as their Head, before the foundation of the world; when as yet they had not an actual being, only a representative one in Christ, (Gal. 3:17) and hence the covenant was made sure to them in him, before the manifestation and application of it to Abraham, and his spiritual seed spoken of in the preceding verse; so that “the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after” that revelation and manifestation of the covenant to Abraham, “cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect”; for what commences in time, can never make void what was confirmed in eternity.

3. The promises of grace and glory, made to the elect of God in covenant, were made to them, as considered in Christ, their head and representative; for whereas these promises were made before the world began, (Titus 1:2) they could not be made to them in their own persons, but as represented by Christ, and therefore were made to him their Head, and to them in him; and hence the promise of life is said to be “in” him, (2 Tim. 1:1) and indeed, all the promises are Yea and Amen “in him” (2 Cor. 1:20). The apostle having said, that “to Abraham and his seed were the promises made”,

observes, “he saith not” and “to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ”; who is the head and representative of all his spiritual offspring, and in whom they are all collected and considered; all the promises made, manifested, and applied to Abraham, and his spiritual seed, were originally made to Christ, the everlasting Father of his spiritual offspring, the common Head and Parent of them (Gal. 3:16).

4. All the blessings of grace, and grants of them in the covenant of grace, given and made to the elect in it, were given and made to Christ first in their name, and as representing them, and to them in him, as considered in him, their head and representative; for when these grants were made, and blessings bestowed, they were not in actual being, only had a representative one in Christ their head; hence grace is said to be given them “in Christ Jesus”, before the world began; and they to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places “in Christ”, as they were chosen in him before the formation of the world (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3, 4).

5. Christ, in the everlasting covenant, engaged in the name of his people, to obey and suffer in their stead; and accordingly he did both in time, as their Head and Representative. He obeyed the law, and fulfilled all righteousness, not as a single individual of human nature, and for himself, but as the federal Head of his people, as representing them; “That so the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us”, says the apostle, (Rom. 8:4) that is, in the elect of God, they being considered in Christ their Head, when he became the fulfilling End of the law for righteousness unto them; and so they were made, or accounted, the righteousness of God “in him” their Head, (Rom. 10:4; 2 Cor. 5:21) in like manner as he in their name engaged to suffer for them; so in time he suffered in their room and stead, as their head and representative; insomuch that they may be truly said to suffer with him; they were all gathered together, recollected in one Head, “in Christ”, and sustained and represented by him when he hung upon the cross, and are said to be “crucified with” him (Eph. 1:10; Col. 2:12).

6. In consequence of Christ’s covenant engagements and performances, when he rose from the dead, he rose not as a private Person, but as a public Person, as the head and representative of all those for whom he obeyed and suffered; and therefore they are said to be quickened and raised together with him, as they were then also justified in him, when he himself, as their Head and Surety was (Eph. 2:5, 6; Col. 3:1; 1 Tim. 3:16). Yea, Christ is also gone to heaven, not only as the Forerunner of his people, but as their Head and Representative; he

has taken possession of heaven in their name, appears in the presence of God for them, and represents them, as the high priest did the children of Israel, in the holy of holies; and hence they are said to be made to sit together in heavenly places “in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6).

7. The federal headship of Christ, may be argued and concluded from Adam being a federal head and representative of all his natural offspring; in which he was “the figure of him that was to come”, that is, Christ; for it was in that chiefly, if not solely, that he was a figure of Christ; at least, that is the chief, if not the only thing the apostle has in view, (Rom. 5:14) as appears by his running the parallel between them, as heads and representatives of their respective offspring: Adam, through his fall, conveying sin and death to all his natural descendants; and Christ, through the free gift of himself, communicating grace, righteousness, and life to all his spiritual seed, the elect, the children his Father gave him: and hence these two are spoken of as the first and last Adam, and the first and second man; as if they were the only two men in the world, being the representatives of each of their seeds, which are included in them (1 Cor. 15:45, 47).

Now, as Christ stands in the relation of an Head to the elect, he has all things delivered into his hands; in honour to him, and in love both to him and them, and for their good; God has given him to be “Head over all things” to the church, (Matthew 11:27; John 3:35; Eph. 1:22) all persons and things are under his command, and at his dispose, to subserve his interest as Head of the church; even angels and men, good and bad, and all things in heaven and in earth; all power therein to protect and defend his people, and to provide for them; all fulness of grace, and the blessings of it to supply them; the government of the church, and of the world, is on his shoulders, who represents them; and therefore their persons, grace, and glory, must be safe in him; the covenant, and all its blessings and promises, are sure in him, the Head and Representative of his people in it.

Chapter 11

OF CHRIST, THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT

Another relation, or office, which Christ bears in the covenant, is that of Mediator; three times in the epistle to the Hebrews is he called the Mediator of the new, or better covenant or testament, (Heb. 8:6, 9:15, 12:24) the same with the everlasting covenant, only so called in reference to a former administration of it. The apostle Paul asserts, that there is “one Mediator between God

and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). Both Jews and Gentiles have a notion of a Mediator; the Jews call the Messiah מְשִׁיחַ, the Mediator, or middle one; and so Philo the Jew, speaks of the most ancient Word of God, as πσσοο, a middle Person between God and men, not unbegotten as God, nor begotten as man, but the middle of the extremes, one between both. The Persians call their God Mithras, מִיִּתְרַס, a Mediator; and the Demons, with the heathens, seem to be, according to them, mediators between the superior gods and men; but we have a more sure word of prophecy to direct us in this matter; Christ is the one and only Mediator. It will be proper to enquire,

1. First, In what sense Christ is the mediator of the covenant; not as Moses, who stood between God and the people of Israel, “to show” them “the word of the Lord”, (Deut. 5:5) to receive the law, the lively oracles, and deliver them to them, said to be ordained, or disposed by angels, in the hand of a mediator, supposed to be Moses (Gal. 3:19). Christ indeed is the revealer and declarer of his Father’s mind and will, and the dispenser of the covenant of grace in the different administrations of it, in each of the periods of time; but this more properly belongs to him as the “angel” or “messenger of the covenant”, as he is called, (Mai. 3:1) than the mediator of it. Christ is a mediator of reconciliation; such an one as interposes between two parties at variance, in order to bring them together, and in some way or other reconcile them to each other. “A mediator is not of one”, of one party; for where there is but one party there can be no difference, and so no need of a mediator; but “God is one”, he is one party, the offended party, and man is the other, the offending party; and Christ is the mediator between them both to bring them together, who are through sin at as great distance as earth and heaven; and he is the antitype of Jacob’s ladder, that reaches both and joins them together; the days-man between them, who lays his hand on them both, and makes peace between them; and so a learned Grecian interprets the word for “mediator” εἰρ|νο ποιός, “a peacemaker”; and this work he performs not merely by way of intreaty, as one man may intreat another to lay aside his resentment against an offender, and not pursue him to his destruction, which lies in his power; or as Moses intreated God with great vehemence and importunity to forgive the Israelites, or blot him out of his book; for however commendable this may be for one man to intercede with another, or with God for an offender, in such a manner; yet it seems too low and mean an office for Christ the Son of God,

barely to intreat his Father to lay aside the marks of his displeasure against a sinner, and not so honourable for God to grant it, without satisfaction; wherefore Christ acts the part of a mediator, by proposing to his Father to make satisfaction for the offence committed, and so appease injured justice. Christ is a mediator of reconciliation in a way of satisfaction; reconciliation in this way is Christ's great work as mediator; this is what was proposed in covenant, and what he therein agreed to do, and therefore is called the mediator of the covenant.

Reconciliation supposes a former state of friendship, a breach of that friendship, and a renewal of it; or a bringing into open friendship again. Man in a state of innocence was in a state of friendship with God, had many high honours and special favours conferred upon him; being made after the image and likeness of God, had all the creatures put in subjection to him, was placed in a delightful garden, had a right to eat of the fruit of all the trees in it but one; to him the creatures were brought to give them names, and an help meet was provided for him; but man being in this honour abode not long, sin soon separated chief friends, and he was drove out of his paradisaical Eden; and appeared to be, as all his posterity are, not only at a distance from God, and alienation to him, but enmity against him, as the carnal mind of man is; and in this state the elect of God were considered, when Christ undertook in covenant to be the mediator of reconciliation for them; and in this condition he found them, when he came to make actual reconciliation for them; "you that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled", (Col. 1:21) and hereby has brought them into an open state of grace and favour with God; into greater nearness to him, and into a more exalted state of friendship with him than was lost by the fall.

It should be observed, that the elect of God are considered in the covenant of grace as fallen creatures; and that Christ being a mediator of reconciliation and satisfaction for them, supposes them such. In the covenant of works there was no mediator; while that covenant remained unbroken, and man continued in a state of integrity, he needed none; he could correspond and converse with God without one; though he might have knowledge of Christ as the Son of God, and second person in the Trinity, which was necessary to his worship of him, yet he knew nothing of him as mediator, nor needed him as such; he could hear the voice of God, and abide in his presence without fear or shame; it was after

he had sinned, and not before, that he hid himself among the trees, on hearing the voice of God: nor is there any mediator for angels, none was provided, nor admitted, for the fallen angels, they were not spared; and the good angels needed not any, having never sinned; they are admitted into the divine presence without a mediator to introduce them; they stand before God, and behold his face continually. Some have thought that Christ is the medium of union of angels with God, and of elect men, chosen in Christ, and considered as unfallen, which I will not object to; but a mediator of reconciliation and satisfaction, Christ is only to fallen men, and they needed one; a reconciliation was necessary, and without such a mediator the purposes of God concerning elect men, the covenant of grace made on their account, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and the salvation of men could not have been accomplished; nor the perfections of God, particularly his justice and holiness, glorified in it.

Sin has been committed, which is offensive to God, provoking to the eyes of his glory, and deserving of his wrath, even of eternal death; the law broken, which reflects dishonour on the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; justice injured and affronted, and which insisted on making a satisfaction, and that nothing less than perfect obedience to the law, and a bearing the penalty of it; fallen man could not make his peace with God, nor reconcile himself to him on such terms; Christ, as mediator of the covenant, undertook to make reconciliation for elect men; and God set him and sent him forth to be, and he is become the propitiation for their sins; and God is pacified towards them for all that they have done, and has taken away all his wrath, and turned himself from the fierceness of his anger, and removed all the visible marks and effects of his displeasure.

Nor reconciliation Christ is the mediator of, as thus stated, any contradiction to the everlasting love of God to his elect in Christ; where there is the strongest love among men, when an offence is committed, there is need of reconciliation to be made. David had the strongest affection for his son Absalom as can well be imagined; Absalom committed a very heinous offence, murdered his brother Amnon, David's firstborn, and heir to his crown; he fled from justice, and from his father's wrath and vengeance he might justly fear; Joab became a mediator between them, first more secretly, by means of the woman of Tekoah, and then more openly in his own person, and succeeded so far as to obtain leave that the young man be called from his exile; nevertheless, when

returned, David would not admit him into his presence until two years after, when, and not before, a full and open reconciliation was made and declared; and yet all this while the heart of David was towards his son, and continued, even notwithstanding his unnatural rebellion against him. And so the love of God to his people is from everlasting to everlasting, invariably the same: with him there is no shadow of turning; there is no change in God, as not from love to hatred, so not from hatred to love; he is in one mind, and none can turn him, no, not Christ himself; nor was it the work of Christ's mediation, nor the design of it, to turn the heart of God; for that proceeded according to the unalterable and unchangeable will of God; nor did the mediation of Christ procure, nor was it intended to procure the love and favour of God to his elect; so far from it, that itself is the fruit and effect of that love (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10). It was love that set forth and sent forth Christ to be the propitiation for sin; it was owing to the good will and free favour of God, that a Mediator was admitted for sinful men; and it appeared still greater, in providing one to be a Mediator of reconciliation for them; and the reconciliation the scriptures speak of, as made by the blood, sufferings, and death of Christ, is not a reconciliation of God to them, as to his love, but justice; but a reconciliation of them to God; and that not so much of their persons, which are always acceptable and well pleasing to God, as considered in Christ, in whom they were chosen, as for their sins, (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:19; Col. 1:20, 21; Heb. 2:17) and which is no other than a satisfaction for them to divine justice; for the reconciliation of their persons in that way, is not to the love and affections of God, from which they were never separated, but to the justice of God, offended by their sins; and the whole is a reconciliation of the divine perfections to each other in the business of salvation; for though these agree among themselves, yet with respect to that, had different claims to make; the love and grace of God pleaded for mercy, and mercy pleaded for itself, that it might be shown to the objects of love; but justice insisted on it, that satisfaction be made for the offences committed; the difficulty was how to answer each of these pleas; Christ interposed, and offered himself in the covenant, to be a Mediator of reconciliation, or to make satisfaction for sin; and so mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Reconciliation then is the principal branch of Christ's office in the covenant as Mediator. Another follows, namely,

His intercession, or advocacy, which proceeds upon

reconciliation or satisfaction made; "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the Propitiation for our sins", (1 John 2:1, 2) and it is his being the Propitiation for sin, that is the foundation of his advocacy, or on which is grounded his plea for the remission of it; he is the Angel of God's presence, who always appears there for his people, and ever lives to make intercession for them; he is first the Mediator of reconciliation, and then of intercession; as they are reconciled to God by his sufferings and death, they are saved through his interceding life. He is called the Angel of God's presence, not only because he enjoys it himself; but because he introduces his people into it, and presents their petitions to God, offers up the prayers of all saints, perfumed with the much incense of his mediation; through which they become acceptable to God. Christ is the medium of access to God, to the throne of his grace; there is no drawing nigh of sinful men to God without a Mediator, without him he is a consuming fire; no man can come to the Father but by Christ; he is the only Way, the new and the living Way; and through him, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, there is access with boldness and confidence. And he is the medium of acceptance, both of persons and services, which are only accepted in the Beloved, and become acceptable through his prevalent mediation and intercession; and he is the medium of conveyance of all the blessings of the covenant of grace to his people, which are all communicated in virtue of his advocacy for them; and he is the medium of the saints' communion and fellowship with God now, as he will be the medium of their glory and happiness to all eternity. The next thing to be considered is,

Secondly, The fitness of Christ for his work and office, as the Mediator of the covenant; since a mediator was necessary, and he must be one of the divine Persons in the Trinity; the Son of God being the middle Person in it, seems most proper and suitable to preserve the order, name, and place of the Persons in it: it does not seem so decent, that the first Person should be a Mediator to the second; but rather, since, as Dr. Goodwin expresses it, the suit of trespass was commenced, and ran in the name of the Father, of the first Person for the rest; it seems most agreeable that the reconciliation be made to him by one of the other Persons; and since the second Person bears the name of a Son, as the first of a Father, it seems most in character that the Son should mediate with the Father, than the Father with the Son; and since it was proper that the Mediator should become the Son of man, as will be seen hereafter, it seems most

agreeable, that he who is the Son of God should become the Son of man; otherwise there would be two Sons in the Trinity, or two Persons so called: and for the first or third Person to become a Mediator between God and man, does not seem so becoming, as he who is the second or middle Person among them. But the principal fitness of Christ for his office, as Mediator, at least for the execution of it, lies in the union of the two natures, human and divine, in his one Person; whereby he is the Immanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh; and as he partakes of both natures, he has an interest in, and a concern for both; he is fit to be a Mediator between God and man; both to take care of things pertaining to God and his glory, and to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

I. It was requisite that he should be man, assume human nature into union with his divine Person, even a true body, and a reasonable soul.

1. That he might be related to those he was a Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour of; that he might be their brother, their near kinsman, their God, and so have an apparent right to redeem them, as the near kinsman, according to the law, had Leviticus 25:48, 49.

2. That sin might be satisfied for, and reconciliation be made for it, in the same nature which sinned; and whereas, according to the scheme of mediation and salvation by Christ, the same individuals that sinned were not to suffer; it seems requisite and reasonable that an individual of that nature should, in their room and stead, that so it might come as near to what the law required as could be (Gen. 2:17).

3. It was proper that the Mediator should be capable of obeying the law, broken by the sin of man: as a divine Person could not be subject to the law, and yield obedience to it; and had he assumed the angelic nature, that would not have been capable of obeying all the precepts of the law, which are required of men; and universal perfect obedience was necessary for the justification of a sinner before God; hence Christ was made of a woman, that he might be made under the law, and yield obedience to it; by which obedience men are made righteous in the sight of God (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 5:19).

4. It was meet the Mediator should be man, that he might be capable of suffering death; as God he could not die, and had he assumed the nature of an angel, that is incapable of dying; and yet suffering the penalty of the law, death, was necessary to make reconciliation; a sacrifice for sin was to be offered, and therefore it was proper Christ should have somewhat to offer; even a

true body, and a reasonable soul, Which he did offer; peace was to be made by blood, and reconciliation by the sufferings of death, and therefore a nature must be assumed capable of shedding blood, and of suffering death; and without which he could not be made sin, and a curse for men, as the law required he should. In a word, it was highly becoming, that the Captain of our salvation should be made perfect through suffering, that he might be a perfect Saviour, which could not be, without the assumption of human nature (see Heb. 2:10, 14, 15, 5:9, 8:3).

5. It was fit the Mediator should be man, that he might be a merciful, as well as a faithful High Priest, have a fellow feeling with his people, and sympathise with them under all their temptations, afflictions, and distresses, and succour and relieve them, from love and affection to them, as their friend and brother (Heb. 2:17, 18, 4:15).

6. It was necessary that he should be holy and righteous, free from all sin, original and actual, that he might offer himself without spot to God, take away the sins of men, and be an advocate for them, (Heb. 7:26, 9:14; 1 John 3:5 2:1) but it was not enough to be truly man, and an innocent person; he must be more than a man, to be a mediator between God and man; it was requisite, therefore,

2. That he should be God as well as man.

1. That he might be able to draw nigh to God, and treat with him about terms of peace, and covenant with him; all which a mere man could not do; and therefore it is with wonder said, and as expressive of the arduousness of the task, of the difficulty of the work, and of the necessity of a divine Person to do it; "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?" (Jer. 30:21) to mediate between him and sinful men, to lay his hands on both, and reconcile them together; none but Jehovah's fellow could or dared to do this.

2. That he might give virtue and value to his obedience and sufferings; for if he had been a mere man, his obedience and righteousness would not have been sufficient to justify men, nor his sufferings and death a proper sacrifice and atonement for sin. But being God as well as man, his righteousness is the righteousness of God; and so sufficient to justify all that believe in him, and them from all their sins; and his blood is the blood of the Son of God, and so cleanses from all sin, and is a proper atonement for it.

3. Being Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour, it naturally and necessarily leads men to put their trust

and confidence in him, and rely upon him, for peace, pardon, and salvation; whereas, if he was a mere man, and not God, this would entail a curse upon them; “for cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm”, (Jer. 17:5) and even to worship and adore him, and ascribe divine honour and glory to him; which to do would be idolatry, was he not God; for though he that is Mediator is to be worshipped by angels and men, yet not as mediator, but as God; for it is his Deity that is the foundation of worship, and renders him the proper object of it; God will “not give” his “glory to another”, (Isa. 42:8) not even the glory of being a Mediator to any other but a divine Person; for of Christ, in his mediatorial capacity, are the words spoken, as appears from the whole preceding context: it is necessary that the Mediator should be God, that he might be the proper object of trust, worship, honour, and glory divine.

Nor is it any objection to his being a Mediator, as to his divine nature, that then the Father and the Spirit would be Mediators too, the divine nature being common to them all; since it is not in the divine nature, essentially considered, but as it subsists in the second Person, the Son of God, that Christ is Mediator, and performs his office; and to exercise this office in it, is no lessening and degrading of his Person, since it is a glory that none but a divine Person is fit to bear: and it may be observed, that among men this office is sometimes assumed and exercised by one superior to either of the parties between whom he mediates; and though the Father may be said to be greater than Christ, considered in his office capacity, yet this does not suppose any subjection and inferiority of his divine Person: nor is it any objection to Christ being Mediator, as to his divine nature, that then he must be a Mediator to himself, or reconcile men to himself; for not to observe, that Christ in his office may be distinguished from himself, as a divine Person; as one may be distinguished from himself as to different circumstances of age, office, &c. There is no impropriety that Christ is a Mediator for himself, or has made reconciliation and satisfaction to himself; for if the Father may be said to reconcile men to himself by his Son, as in (2 Cor. 5:18, 19; Col. 1:20) why may not the Son be said to reconcile men to himself, as God, by his sufferings and death as man? There is no impropriety, that if a man has offended a society of men, one of that society should take upon him to be a mediator for him, and reconcile him to that society, though he himself is a part of it, and as such, equally offended as they: or, still nearer to the case in hand, supposing a rebellion in a nation, against the king of it, and this king should have

a son, who is heir to his throne, and so must be equally offended with the rebels as his father, and yet should take upon him to be a mediator between his father and the rebels, and make peace between them; where would be the impropriety of it, though he himself, with his father, is the party offended?

The mediation of Christ thus stated, meets with and militates against two errors; one of those, who say he is only a Mediator as to his human nature; and that of others, who assert him to be only a Mediator as to his divine nature. But most certain it is, that there are various acts and works of Christ, as Mediator, in which both natures manifestly appear, and are concerned; not to make mention of the incarnation itself, or Christ’s assumption of human nature, which manifestly implies both; for it was a divine Person that partook of flesh and blood, or assumed, not an angelic, but an human nature: it was the Word, which was in the beginning with God, and was God, that was made flesh, and dwelt among men; it was he that was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with him, that was found in fashion as a man, and took on him the form of a servant; it was God manifest in the flesh. In the obedience of Christ both natures are to be perceived; not only the human nature, in his being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; but the divine nature also; or otherwise, where is the wonder, that “though he was a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered”, (Heb. 5:8) and it was that which gave virtue to his obedience, and made it satisfactory to the justice of God, and made the law more honourable than the perfect and perpetual obedience of angels and men could do. In the act of laying down his life for men, both natures appear; the human nature, which is passive in it, and is the life laid down; the divine nature, or the divine Person of Christ, who is active in it, and laid down his life of himself, he having such a power over his life as man, and that at his dispose, as no mere creature ever had; and both are to be observed in his taking of it up again; his human nature, in his body being raised from the dead; his divine nature or person, in raising it up of himself, whereby he was declared to be the Son of God with power: he was put to death in the flesh, in human nature, and quickened in the Spirit, or by his divine nature; the sacrifice of himself, was his own act, as Mediator; what was offered up were his soul and body, his whole human nature; this was offered by his eternal Spirit, or divine nature, which gave virtue to it, and made it a proper atoning sacrifice for sin. To observe no more, the redemption and purchase of his people,

is a plain proof of both natures being concerned in his work as Mediator; the purchase price, or the price of redemption, is his precious blood, his blood as man; but what gave virtue to that blood, and made it a sufficient ransom price, is, that it was the blood of him that is God as well as man; and therefore God is said to purchase the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

3. It was not only requisite and necessary, that the Mediator should be God and man, but that he should be both in one Person, or that the two natures should be united in one Person; or, rather, that the human nature should be taken up, and united to, and subsist in the Person of the Son of God; for the human nature, as it has no personality of itself, it adds none to the Son of God; it is no constituent part of his Person; he was a divine Person, before his assumption of human nature; and what he assumed was not a person, but a nature, and is called a “thing, nature, seed”, (Luke 1:35; Heb. 2:16) had it been a person, there would be two persons in Christ, and so two mediators, contrary to the express words of scripture, (1 Tim. 2:5) and if the human nature was a person, as it must be a finite one, what was done and suffered by it, must be finite also, and of no use but to that person, and could have no sufficient virtue and value in them to justify men, and atone for sin; but these two natures being in personal union, the works and actions of either, though distinct and peculiar to each, yet belong to the whole Person, and are predicated of it; and so those of the human nature have virtue and efficacy in them, from the personal union, to make them effectual to the purposes for which they were designed, without which they would be ineffectual. Hence it may be observed, that Christ is described in one nature, by qualities, works, and actions, which belong to him in the other, and is what divines call a communication of idioms, or properties; thus the Lord of glory is said to be crucified; God is said to purchase the church with his blood; and the Son of man is said to be in heaven, while he was here on earth, (1 Cor. 2:8; Acts 20:28; John 3:13) the advantage of this personal union is, that the divine nature has an influence upon, and gives virtue and dignity to whatsoever is done or suffered in the human nature; which is of the utmost concern in the mediation of Christ: nor is it any objection that two natures should influence one and the same action, or be concerned in the production or perfection of it; when it is observed, that the soul and body of man, united together, concur in the performance of the same action, whether good or bad. I shall next enquire,

Thirdly, How Christ came to be the Mediator of the

covenant, even the Mediator of reconciliation in it: it was owing originally to a thought in the heart of God, the offended Party; whose thoughts were “thoughts of peace, and not of evil”, towards offending man; this affair began with God the Father; “All things are of God”, that is, the Father, as appears by what follows; “Who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation”; the doctrine of it, to publish and declare to the world; the sum and substance of which is, “to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself”, (2 Cor. 5:18, 19) that is, consulting with Christ his Son, and with him contriving the scheme and method of reconciling to himself the world of his elect, considered as sinful fallen creatures in Adam: upon the first thought of peace and reconciliation, a council of peace was held between the divine Persons, which issued in a covenant of peace in which it was proposed to Christ, and he agreed to it, to be the Peace maker, upon which he was constituted the Mediator of it; “I was set up from everlasting”, (Prov. 8:23) says Christ; that is, by his divine Father; though not without his own consent: or, “I was anointed”, which does not design a collation of any gifts, qualifying him for the office of Mediator; as when he is said to be anointed with the Holy Ghost; only his investiture with that office, so expressed, because the rite of anointing was used in the consecration of kings, priests, and prophets to their office. And God not only set him up, but “set” him “forth”, in his eternal purposes and decrees, to be the “propitiation for sin”, to make reconciliation and satisfaction for it, (Rom. 3:25) and declared him in prophecy to be the Prince of peace, and the Man that should appear in human nature, and make peace and reconciliation between him and men; he sanctified him, or set him apart to this office before the world began; and in the fulness of time, sent him to be the propitiation, or propitiatory sacrifice, for the sins of men; and even before his incarnation, being constituted in covenant the Mediator of it, he acted as such, throughout the whole Old Testament dispensation: he exercised in each of his offices then; his prophetic office, by making known to Adam the covenant of grace, immediately after his fall; by preaching by his Spirit to the disobedient in the times of Noah, the spirits that were in prison, in the times of the apostle Peter; and by his Spirit, in the prophets testifying beforehand his own sufferings, and the glory that should follow. His Kingly office, in gathering, governing, and protecting his church and people, who acknowledged him as their King, Judge, and Lawgiver: and his Priestly office, through the virtue of his blood

reaching backward to the foundation of the world, and therefore said to be the Lamb slain so early, (Rev. 13:8) and instances there are of his intercession under the former dispensation, (Zech. 1:12, 13, 3:1-4) the actual existence of Christ's human nature from eternity, was not necessary to his being a Mediator of the covenant; it was enough that he agreed in covenant, to be man in time; that this was known he would be, and was certain he should be; and accordingly he was, from the instant of the covenant making, reckoned and accounted, and bore the name of the God-man and Mediator, and acted as such. Some parts of his work did not require the actual existence of the human nature; he could draw nigh to God, as Jehovah's fellow, without it; he could treat with God about terms of peace, and promise to fulfil them, and covenant with God without it: it no more required the actual existence of his human nature, to covenant with his Father, about the reconciliation and redemption of man, than it required that the Father should assume such a nature to covenant with his Son about the same: there were other parts of Christ's work as Mediator, which required its actual existence; as obedience to the law, and suffering death, the penalty of it; but then, and not before, was it necessary for him to assume it, when the fulness of time was come agreed on, to obey and suffer. It only remains now,

Fourthly, To show what a Mediator Christ is, the excellency of him, and the epithets which belong to him as such. And,

1. He is the one and only Mediator; "There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus"; and there is no other: the papists plead for other mediators, angels and saints departed; and distinguish between a Mediator of redemption, and a mediator of intercession; the former, they own, is peculiar to Christ, the latter common to angels and saints; but there is no Mediator of intercession, but who is a Mediator of redemption and reconciliation; the instances produced are insufficient, and respect either the uncreated angel, Jesus Christ himself, (Zech. 1:12; Rev. 8:3) or saints, ministers, and members of churches in the present state, and not as departed, (Rev. 5:8) and if it is to be understood of departed spirits, it is only an (Rev. 6:9) instance of prayer for themselves, and not for others: the passages in (Ex. 32:13; Job 5:1) with others, are quite impertinent.

2. Christ is a Mediator of men only, not of angels; good angels need not any, and as for evil angels, none is provided nor admitted, as before observed. Yet not of all men; for the world, said to be reconciled to God

by Christ, is not all the individuals in it; but the world Christ gave his flesh, or human nature for the life of, since there is a world for which he is not so much as a Mediator of intercession, and much less a Mediator of reconciliation (see 2 Cor. 5:19; John 6:51, 17:9). The persons for whom Christ acted as a Mediator, by means of death, for the redemption of their transgressions, were such as were called, and received the promise of the eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15).

3. Yet he is the Mediator both for Jews and Gentiles; for some of both these are chosen vessels of mercy; and God is a covenant God, not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also; and Christ is a Propitiation, not for the sins of the Jews only, but for the sins of the whole world, or of God's elect throughout the whole world: and therefore both have access to God through the one Mediator, Christ, (Rom. 9:23, 24, 3:29, 30; 1 John 2:2; Eph. 2:18).

4. Christ is Mediator both for Old and New Testament saints; there is but one Mediator for both, but one Way to the Father, which is Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life; but one Way of life, peace, reconciliation, and salvation; but one Redeemer and Saviour; but one name given under heaven among men, whereby they can be saved; Old and New Testament saints are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus; he is the Foundation of the apostles and prophets.

5. Christ is a prevalent Mediator, his mediation is always effectual, ever succeeds, and is infallible; as his work was to make peace and reconciliation, and he agreed and engaged to make it; he has made it, the thing is done, and done effectually; and as for his prayers, they are always heard, his intercession ever prevails, and is never in vain; "I knew that thou hearest me always" (John 11:42).

6. Christ is an everlasting Mediator; he was Mediator from everlasting, and acted as such throughout the whole Old Testament period and still continues; he has an unchangeable priesthood; his blood always speaks peace and pardon, and he ever lives to make intercession; and when his mediatorial kingdom will be completed, and there will be no need of him, either as a Mediator of reconciliation or intercession, at least in the manner he has been, and now is; for sin being wholly removed from the saints, even as to the being of it, they may have access to God, and he may communicate unto them, without the intervention of a Mediator; as is the case of the holy angels; though Christ may be the medium of the glory and happiness of his people to all eternity; and since the happiness of the saints will

greatly lie in beholding the glory of Christ as God-man, and the glory of God will be most illustriously displayed in him, it may be admitted: I shall observe no more, only that this office of Christ, as Mediator, includes his Kingly, Priestly, and Prophetic offices; all which will be considered in their proper place.

Chapter 12

OF CHRIST, THE SURETY OF THE COVENANT.

The surety-ship of Christ is a branch of his mediatorial office; one way in which Christ has acted the part of a Mediator between God and men, is by engaging on their behalf, to do and suffer whatever the law and justice of God required, to make satisfaction for their sins. The Greek word for “surety” εὑψυχξ; is used but once throughout the whole New Testament, (Heb. 7:22) and there of Christ; where he is said to be made, or become, “the Surety of a better testament”, or covenant. And the word is derived either from σῦψοχξ; “near”, because a surety draws nigh to one on the behalf of another, and lays himself under obligation to him for that other; thus Christ drew nigh to his Father, and became a Surety to him for them; hence those words, “I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?” (Jer. 30:21) or rather, it is derived from ψυτω, which signifies the “hand”; because when one becomes a Surety, he either puts something into the hand of another for security, or rather puts his hand into the hand of another, or strikes hands with him; a rite much used in surety-ship, and is often put for it, and used as synonymous; see (Prov. 6:1, 17:18, 22:26). Snidas derives it from ער, ער the “earth”, because that is the firmest of the elements, and remains immoveable, and may denote the firmness and security of the promise, or bond, which a surety gives to one for another. The Hebrew word for a “surety”, in the Old Testament, ער (Gen. 43:9) and elsewhere, has the signification of “mixing”, because, as Stockins observes, in surety-ship persons are so mixed among themselves, and joined together, that the one is thereby bound to the other: and, upon the whole, Christ, as a Surety, drew nigh to his Father on the behalf of the elect, struck hands with him, and gave him firm security for them, and put himself in their place and stead, and engaged to perform everything for them that should be required of him; for the better understanding this branch of Christ’s office in the covenant, it may be proper to consider,

1. First, In what sense Christ is the Surety of the

covenant. And,

a. First, He is not the Surety for his Father, to his people, engaging that the promises made by him in covenant shall be fulfilled; which is the Socinian sense of Christ’s surety-ship; for though the promises were made to Christ, and are Yea and Amen in him; and many of them, such as respect him, were fulfilled in him, and by him, as the minister of the circumcision, (Gal. 3:16; 2 Cor. 1:20; Rom. 15:8). Yet, such is the faithfulness of God that has promised, that there needs no surety for him; his faithfulness is sufficient, which he will not suffer to fail; he is God, that cannot lie, nor deny himself; there is no danger of his breaking his word, and not fulfilling his promise, which may be depended on, and strongly confided in: and if his word was not enough, he has joined his oath to it; so that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, the heirs of promise might have strong consolation, in believing the fulfilment of every promise made (Heb. 6:18). Besides, though Christ is equal with his Father, is Jehovah’s fellow, and has all the perfections of Deity in him, yet he is not greater than he; and, with reverence to him be it said, he cannot give a greater security, than the word and oath of God, or that will lay a firmer foundation for confidence in the promises of God; and it is with an ill grace these men advance such a notion; since they make Christ to be but a mere man; and what dependence can there be upon him, when cursed is the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm? (Jer. 17:5) and what greater security is it possible that a mere man should give, than what the promise of God itself gives? Or what additional strength can a creature give to that, to induce a stronger belief of it? Nor,

b. Secondly, Is Christ in such sense a Surety, as civilians call a “φιδεφυσσορ”, or such a surety that is jointly engaged with a debtor, for the payment of a debt; or is so bound for another, as that other remains under obligation, and the obligation of the surety is only an accession to the principal obligation, which is made stronger thereby, and the creditor has the greater security; yet still the principal debtor is left under his debt, that is not removed from him, and he is under obligation to pay it, if able; and it is first to be demanded of him, or should his surety desert his surety-ship, and not make satisfaction. But now none of these things are to be supposed in Christ’s surety-ship.

l. He is not a mere accessory to the obligation of his people for payment of their debts; he and they are not engaged in one joint bond for payment; he has taken their whole debt upon himself, as the apostle Paul did in

the case of Onesimus; and he has paid it off, and entirely discharged it alone.

2. Nor was any such condition made in his suretyship engagements for his people, that they should pay if they were able; for God the Father, to whom Christ became a Surety, knew, and he himself, the Surety, knew full well, when this suretyship was entered into, that they were not able to pay, and never would be; yea, that it was impossible for them, in their circumstances, ever to pay; for having failed in their obedience to God, all after acts of obedience, though ever so perfect, could not make amends, or satisfy for that disobedience, since to those God has a prior right; and their failure in obedience, brings upon them a debt of punishment, which is everlasting, and “ad infinitum”; and, if left on them, would be ever paying, and never paid (see Luke 7:41, 42; Matthew 18:24, 25, 5:26, 25:46).

3. Nor is such a supposition to be made, that Christ might desert his suretyship, withdraw himself from it; this indeed has been supposed by some: but though Christ was not obliged to become a Surety, he voluntarily engaged in this work, and cheerfully took it on him; yet when he had undertaken it he could not relinquish it, without being guilty of disobedience to his Father, and of unfaithfulness to his own engagements; for from the instant he became a Surety for his people, he became a Servant to his Father, and he called and reckoned him as such; “Thou art my servant, O Israel; behold my servant whom I uphold”, (Isa. 49:3, 42:1) and laid his commands upon him, both to obey his law, and lay down his life for his people, both which he undertook to do, and did perform; or otherwise he could not have had the character of God’s righteous Servant, nor would have been faithful to him that appointed him, nor to himself, (Isa. 53:10; Heb. 3:2) and consequently could not be without sin, which God forbid should ever be said or supposed of the holy Jesus, who did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth; yet this has been supposed of him by some, and the dreadful consequences of it, which have been blasphemously uttered by some schoolmen and popish writers, not fit to be mentioned.

4. Nor is it to be supposed, that Christ might not fulfil his suretyship engagements, or not make satisfaction, as might be expected; since if he did not, it must be either for want of will, or want of power; not of will, since the persons he became a surety for, he bore the strongest affection to; these were the sons of men, in whom was all his delight from everlasting; and such his love to them, that nothing whatever could separate from it: nor could it be for want of power, since, as a

divine Person, he is the mighty God; as Mediator, has all power in heaven and in earth; as man, was made strong by the Lord for this work, and had a power, as such, to lay down his life, and take it up again: and should he have deserted his suretyship, and not have made the promised and expected satisfaction, the purposes of God, respecting the salvation of the elect by Christ, must have been frustrated, and made null and void; the council of peace held concerning it would have been without effect; the covenant of grace abolished; the salvation of God’s people not obtained, and the glory of God, of his grace, mercy, truth, and faithfulness lost; yea, Christ himself must have been deprived of his mediatorial glory; all too shocking to be admitted. But,

c. Thirdly, Christ is in such sense a Surety, as civilians call an expromissor, one that promises out and out, absolutely engages to pay another’s debt; takes another’s obligation, and transfers it to himself, and by this act dissolves the former obligation, and enters into a new one, which civilians call “novation”; so that the obligation no longer lies on the principal debtor, but he is set free, and the Surety is under the obligation, as if he was the principal debtor, or the guilty person. Now this sort of suretyship being most similar, and coming nearest to Christ’s suretyship, is made use of to express and explain it; though they do not in everything tally; for the civil law neither describes nor admits such a Surety among men as Christ is; who so substituted himself in the room and stead of sinners, as to suffer punishment in soul and body for them; but in some things there is an agreement.

1. Christ, by his suretyship, has took the whole debt of his people upon himself, and made himself solely responsible for it; he has dissolved thereby their obligation to payment or punishment, having taken it on himself; so that they were by it entirely set free from the very instant he became their Surety; it is a rule that will hold good, as Maccovius observes, that as soon as anyone becomes a surety for another, the other is immediately freed, if the surety be accepted: which is the case here; for from henceforward, God the Father looked for his debt, and expected satisfaction of Christ, and let the sinners go free, for whom he engaged; he was gracious, and said, “deliver” them “from going down to the pit; I have found a Ransom”, (Job 33:24) just as when the apostle Paul became a surety for Onesimus; supposing him accepted as such by Philemon, Onesimus was set free; the apostle taking the whole debt and wrong upon himself, and promising to repay and make satisfaction, and which he wrote and signed with his own hand.

2. When Christ became a Surety for his people, their sins were no longer imputed to them, but were imputed to Christ, were placed to his account, and he became responsible for them; it was not, at the time of his sufferings and death, that God laid on him first the iniquities of his people, and they were imputed and reckoned to him, and he accounted them as his own, (2 Cor. 5:19; Isa. 53:6; Ps. 40:12, 69:5) by which it appears, that obligation to payment of debts, or punishment, did not lie upon the principal debtor, or guilty person, but upon Christ, who became their Surety; for,

3. The Old Testament saints were really freed from guilt, condemnation, and death, before the actual payment was made by Christ their Surety; some had as full an application of the pardon of their sins, and as clear a view of their interest in Christ's righteousness, as their justifying righteousness before God, as any of the New Testament saints ever had; the one were saved by the grace of Christ as the other; yea, they were received into heaven, and actually glorified, before the suretyship engagements of Christ were fulfilled (Isa. 43:25, 45:24, 25; Acts 15:11; Heb. 11:13-16). So that it is a plain case, that the obligation to payment and punishment lay not on those for whom Christ became a Surety, but was transferred from them to him; unless this absurdity can be admitted, that such an obligation lay on glorified saints, till the actual payment was made by Christ; or that there was a "limbus patrum", as the papists say, where the saints, before Christ's coming, were detained; but were set free by him when he came. Ic4. It is certain that the Old Testament saints had knowledge of the suretyship engagements of Christ, and prayed and pleaded for the application of the benefits of them to them, (Job 19:25; Ps. 119:122; Isa. 38:14) and which they enjoyed: and such was the dignity of Christ's person, and his known faithfulness to his engagements, and the eternity of them, which with God has no succession, they were always present with him, and in full view, as if actually performed; before and after made no difference in the sight of God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and eternity itself as but a moment. And now, from this suretyship of Christ arise both the imputation of sin to Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness to his people; this is the ground and foundation of both, and on which the priestly office of Christ stands, and in virtue of which it is exercised (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:20-22). I proceed,

2. Secondly, To consider what Christ as a Surety, engaged to do. And,

a. First, He engaged to pay the debts of his people,

and satisfy for the wrong and injury done by them; this may be illustrated by the instance of the apostle Paul engaging for Onesimus; which is thus expressed, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account; I Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it", (Philem. 1:18, 19). Sin is a wrong and injury done to divine justice, and to the holy law of God, broken by it; which Christ undertook to satisfy for; and sins are debts; see (Matthew 6:12) compared with (Luke 11:4) not proper ones, for then they might be committed with impunity, since it is right and commendable to pay debts: but in an improper sense, as debts oblige to payment, so sins to punishment; even to endure the curse of the law, and death eternal, the sanction of it: these debts, or sins, are infinite objectively, as they are contracted and committed against an infinite being, and require punishment of a creature ad infinitum; and therefore not to be paid off, or answered, by a finite creature; but Christ being an infinite Person, as God, was able to pay off those debts, and answer for those sins, and engaged to do it, and has done it. There is a twofold debt paid by Christ, as the Surety of his people; the one is a debt of obedience to the law of God; this he engaged to do, when he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will"; thy law is within my heart: and accordingly he was made under the law, and yielded perfect obedience to it, by which his people are made righteous; and the other is a debt of punishment, incurred through failure of obedience in them; the curse of the law he has endured, the penalty of it, death; and by paying both these debts, the whole righteousness of the law is fulfilled in his people, considered in him their Head and Surety. Now let it be observed, that these debts are not pecuniary ones, though there is an allusion to such, and the language is borrowed from them; but criminal ones, a wrong and injury done, as supposed in the case of Onesimus; and are of such a nature as deserve and require punishment in body and soul, being transgressions of the righteous law of God; and God is to be considered, not merely as a creditor, but as the Judge of the whole earth, who will do right, and who will by no means clear the guilty, without a satisfaction to his justice; and yet there is a mixture of grace, mercy, and goodness in God, with his justice in this affair, by admitting a Surety to obey, suffer, and die, in the room and stead of his people, which he was not obliged unto; nor does the law give the least hint of an allowance of it; nor do the civil laws of men admit of any such thing, that an innocent person should suffer death in the room of one that is guilty, even though he consents to it, and desires it; because no man has a

power over his own life, to dispose of it at pleasure; but God, who can dispense with his own law, if he pleases, has thought fit to explain it, and put a construction on it in favour of his people, where it is not express; and allow of a commutation of persons, that his Son should stand in their legal place and stead, obey, suffer, and die for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him. This is owing to his sovereign grace and mercy; nor is at all inconsistent with his justice, since Christ fully consented to all this, who is the Province of life, and had power over his own life, as man, to lay it down, and take it up again; and since justice is fully satisfied, by the obedience and death of Christ, and the law magnified and made honourable, and more so than it could have been by all the obedience and sufferings of angels and men put together.

b. Secondly, Another thing which Christ as a Surety engaged to do, was to bring all the elect safe to glory; this may be illustrated by Judah's surety-ship for Benjamin; thus expressed to his father, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever" (Gen. 43:9). And thus Christ became a Surety to his divine Father, for his beloved Benjamin, the chosen of God, and precious; as he asked them of his Father, and they were given into his hands, to be preserved by him, that none of them might be lost; he agreed that they should be required of his hand, everyone of them, and pass under the hand of him that telleth them, and their whole number appear complete, and none missing; as will be the case, when he shall say, "Lo, I, and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. 2:13). Christ engaged to "bring" his people to his Father; this was the work proposed to him, and which he agreed to do; "to bring Jacob again to him, and to restore the preserved of Israel", (Isa. 49:5, 6) to recover the lost sheep, to ransom them out of the hands of him that was stronger than they; to redeem them from all iniquity, and from the law, its curse and condemnation, and save them with an everlasting salvation, and bring them safe to his Father in heaven; and because he laid himself under obligation to do all this; hence he says, "them also I must bring", into his fold here, and into heaven and glory hereafter, (John 10:16) and "set" them "before" his Father; as he did at his death, when all the elect were gathered together in one Head, even in him, to present them in the body of his flesh, through death, holy, unblameable, and unreprieveable in the sight of God; and as he now does in heaven, where he appears in the presence of God for them, and they

are set down in heavenly places in him, as their Head and Surety; and as he will at the last day, when he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father, the mediatorial kingdom, the kingdom of priests, complete and perfect, as he received them; and having first presented them to himself, as a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, he will present them faultless before the presence of his Father's glory, with exceeding joy; and will be so far from bearing any blame, having so fully discharged his surety-ship engagements, that he will appear without sin unto salvation; even without sin imputed, without the wrong done by his people put on his account; all being fully answered for according to agreement.

Chapter 13 **OF CHRIST, THE TESTATOR OF THE** **COVENANT.**

First, The covenant of grace bears the name, and has the nature of a testament: it is often called the new and better testament, as administered under the gospel dispensation, (Matthew 26:28; Heb. 7:22, 9:15) in distinction from the former: it is called a testament, in allusion to the last will and testament of men. And, la. Because it is the will of God himself, and not another; the will of him that is sovereign and absolute, who does according to his will in heaven and in earth, in nature, providence, and grace. The covenant is founded on the will of God, and is the pure effect of it; he was not obliged to make it; he freely and of his own accord came into it; so all the contracting parties in it, as has been before observed. A man's will or testament ought to be voluntary; he is not to be forced nor drawn, nor pressed to make it, contrary to his inclination; or otherwise it is not his own will. The covenant, or testament of God, is of his own making, without any influence from another; all the articles in it are of his free good will and pleasure; as, that he will be the covenant God of his people; that they shall be his sons and daughters; that they shall be his heirs, and joint heirs with Christ; that they shall enjoy all the blessings of grace, redemption, pardon, justification, regeneration, perseverance in grace and glory; for he hath bequeathed, in this will, both grace and glory to his people (Ps. 89:11; Luke 12:32).

2. As a will consists of various legacies to various persons, so does the covenant of grace; some to Christ, for he, under different considerations, is a legatee in it, and a testator of it: all the elect, his spiritual seed and offspring, are bequeathed unto him, as his portion and inheritance, and with which he is greatly delighted (Deut. 32:9; Ps. 2:8, 16:6). "As my Father hath

appointed unto me a kingdom”, says he, (Luke 22:29) his mediatorial kingdom, a kingdom of priests, and which he disposed of to him in a testamentary way, as the word there used signifies. There are other legacies, such as before suggested, respecting grace and glory, left in this will for the brethren of Christ, among whom he is the firstborn, and so appointed principal heir, yea, heir of all things, and they joint heirs with him; and what is given to them, is in trust with him for them, particularly the inheritance bequeathed, which they obtain in him, and is reserved with him in heaven for them.

3. In wills, what a man disposes of, is, or should be, his own; no man has a power to dispose, nor ought to dispose of, what is another’s, or not his own; or otherwise, his will is a void will, and such bequests void bequests. All the blessings of goodness, whether of nature, providence, or grace, are all the Lord’s own, and he has a sovereign right to dispose of them as he pleases, and to give them to whomsoever he will; and against which no one has any just cause or reason to object; and if he does, it is to no purpose; “Is it not lawful for me”, says the Testator of the covenant, “to do what I will with mine own?” Is thine eye evil, because I am good?” (Matthew 20:15).

4. This will, or testament, of Jehovah, is an ancient one, it was made in eternity; it is called an everlasting covenant, or testament; not only because it always continues, and will never become null and void, but because it is from everlasting; the bequests and donations made in it were made before the world began (2 Tim. 1:9). It is, indeed, sometimes called a new testament, not because newly made, but because newly published and declared, at least in a more clear and express manner; a new and fresh copy of it has been delivered out to the heirs of promise.

5. It is a will or testament that is unalterable; “Though it be but a man’s covenant”, or testament, “yet if it be confirmed” by his own handwriting and seal, and especially by his death, “no man disannulleth or addeth thereunto” (Gal. 3:15). The covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and sure; this testament, or will, is founded upon the immutability of the divine counsel; so that the heirs of promise, the legatees in it, may have strong consolation, and be fully assured of enjoying their legacies in it; which are the sure mercies of David, of David’s Son and Antitype, as all the promises of it are Yea and Amen in him.

6. Testaments, or wills, are generally sealed as well as signed: the seals of God’s will or testament are not the ordinances; circumcision was no seal of the covenant of

grace; it was a seal to Abraham, and to him only, that he should be the father of believing Gentiles; and that the same righteousness of faith should come upon them, which came upon him, when in uncircumcision: nor is baptism, which is falsely said to come in the room of it, and much less is it a seal of the covenant; nor the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper; for though the blood of Christ, one of the symbols in it, is yet not that itself: but the seals are the Holy Spirit of God, and the blood of Christ; and yet the Holy Spirit is not such a seal that makes the covenant, or testament, surer in itself, only assures the Lord’s people of their interest in it, by witnessing it to their spirits, by being in them the earnest of the inheritance bequeathed them, and by sealing them up unto the day of redemption; properly speaking, the blood of Christ is the only seal of this testament, by which it is ratified and confirmed; and therefore called the blood of the covenant, and the blood of the new testament, (Zech. 9:11; Matthew 26:28; Heb. 13:20).

7. To all wills there are commonly witnesses, and often three, and in some cases three are required. Now as God sware by himself, because he could sware by no greater; so because no other and proper witnesses could be had, to witness this will made in eternity, God himself, or the three divine Persons, became witnesses to it, the Three that bare record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost (1 John 5:7). Unless we choose to conceive of things in this manner; that as the Father, the first Person, gives the lead in all things in nature and in grace, and as he did in the council of peace, so in the covenant of grace, or in this testament, he may be considered as the maker of the will, or testament, and the Son and Spirit as witnesses to it.

8. This will, or testament, is registered in the sacred writings, from thence the probate of it is to be taken; the public notaries, or amanuenses, that have copied it under a divine direction, are the prophets and apostles; hence the writings of the one are called the Old Testament, and the writings of the other the New Testament, the latter being the more clear, full, and correct copy. The covenant of grace having the nature of a testament, shows that there is no restipulation in it on the part of men; no more than there is a restipulation of legatees in a will; what is bequeathed to them being without their knowledge and consent, and without anything being required of them, to which they give their assent.

The covenant of grace is properly a covenant to Christ, in which he restipulates; but a testament to his people, or a pure covenant of promise. Also it may be observed, that the legacies in this testament are owing

to the goodwill of the testator, and not to any merit in the legatees; "For if theft which are of the law be heirs", if they that seek eternal life by the works of the law be heirs of grace and glory, then, says the apostle, "faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect", which declare it to be a free donation: and so again, "If the inheritance be of the law", or to be obtained by the works of it, "it is no more of promise"; these will not consist with, but contradict one another; "but God gave it to Abraham by promise"; as he has done to all the legatees in his covenant or will (see Rom. 4:14; Gal. 3:18).

Secondly, The Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, may be considered as testator of the covenant of grace, as it is a will or testament, and which is plainly suggested in Hebrews 9:15-17 for,

a. Christ as God has an equal right to dispose of things as his divine Father, seeing all that the Father has are his; as all the perfections of deity, so all persons, and all things in nature, providence, and grace; particularly all the blessings of grace and of glory. He is over all God blessed for ever, and all things are of him and owe their being to him, and are at his dispose; yea, all things are delivered by the Father to him as mediator: and if the Spirit disposes of his gifts and graces, dividing them to every man severally as he will; the Son of God may be reasonably thought to have a power and right to dispose of the blessings of his goodness to whomsoever he pleases.

b. Nothing is disposed of in the covenant, or testament, without his counsel and consent; for though with respect to creatures, angels and men, it may be said of God, "with whom took he counsel?" Yet with his Son, the Wonderful Counsellor, the Angel of the great council, he did; for the council of peace was between them both, the Father and the Son, which respected the salvation of men, and the donation of grace and glory to them.

c. Nor was anything given in covenant, or disposed of in the will and testament of God, but with respect to the death of Christ; all promised in covenant was on condition of Christ's making his soul an offering for sin, and of pouring out his soul unto death, (Isa. 53:10-12) all the blessings of grace bestowed on Old Testament saints, as they were legacies in this testament, so they were given forth in virtue of the blood of the covenant, which had a virtue that reached backward; Christ being the lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and there is no blessing of grace in the covenant, but what is on account of the death of Christ the testator;

redemption of transgressions, that were under both the first and second testaments, was by means of death; and without shedding of blood there was no remission under either dispensation; and it is the death of Christ that secures from condemnation, as well as by it reconciliation is made.

d. Whatever is given in this will, is given to Christ first, to be disposed of by him, so that he is the executor as well as the testator of it; he was set up as mediator from everlasting; was prevented with the blessings of goodness, or had them first given to him; he was possessed of a fulness of grace, and grace was given to the elect in him before the world began; not only the blessings of grace were put into his hands to dispose of, but eternal life, for he has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him; whether this be considered as an inheritance which He, the Word of God's grace, the essential Word, is able to give among them that are sanctified by faith in him; or as a kingdom prepared for them in the purposes of God, and which Christ gives a right unto, and a meekness for; yea, he himself disposes of it in a testamentary way, "and I appoint unto you a kingdom", dispose of it to you by will and testament (Luke 22:29). Wherefore,

3. Thirdly, The death of Christ is necessary to put this will in force, to give strength unto it, that it may be executed according to the design of the maker of it; "for where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all, while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:16, 17). It is not the death of any, only of the testator himself, that gives validity to his will, or renders it executable; and it is only the death of Christ that gives force and strength unto, or ratifies and confirms the covenant of grace; not the death of slain sacrifices, for though by the blood and death of these the first testament was dedicated, ratified, and confirmed in a typical way, as these were types of Christ in his bloodshed and death, (Heb. 9:19-22) yet the new testament is only, really, truly, and properly ratified and confirmed by the death of Christ itself; and whereas the Father and the Spirit were jointly concerned with Christ in making this will or testament, it was not necessary that they should die, nor could they, since they never assumed a nature capable of dying; only it was necessary that one of the testators should assume a nature capable of death, and in it die to give force to this will; and infinite wisdom judged it most proper and fitting that the Son of God should do it, who took upon him, not the nature of angels, who are incorporeal, immaterial and

immortal spirits, and die not; but he became a partaker of flesh and blood, of human nature, that he might die and ratify the testament and will he was concerned in the making of; and this was necessary to give it strength and force: not as if it was alterable until the death of Christ, as the wills of men are until their death, which while they live are liable to be altered again and again; for the first thoughts of God always remain, and that to all generations; his mind is never turned, his counsel is immutable, and so his covenant and testament founded thereon is unalterable; nor that the inheritance bequeathed in this will could not be enjoyed before the death of Christ; this indeed is the case with respect to the wills of men, the legacies are not payable, nor estates bequeathed enjoyed, until the testator dies; but such is not only the certainty of Christ's death, and which with God was as if it was, before it really was, but such is the virtue and efficacy of it, that it reaches backward to the beginning of the world, as before observed; wherefore the Old Testament saints not only received the promise of eternal inheritance, but enjoyed it before the death of Christ, though in virtue of it, for they are said to "inherit the promises", that is, the things promised, (Heb. 9:15, 6:11) but the death of Christ was necessary to confirm the covenant or testament, that the legatees might appear to have a legal right to what was bequeathed to them, law and justice being satisfied thereby; so that no caveat could be put in against them, and no obstruction made to their claim of legacies, and their enjoyment of them; and no danger of this will being ever set aside. There is another concern and part which Christ has in the covenant, and that is the "messenger" of it, (Mai. 3:1) but as that respects the administration of it, it will be considered in its proper place, after the fall of man.

Chapter 14

OF THE CONCERN THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAS IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

Having considered the parts which the Father and the Son have taken in the covenant, the part which the Holy Spirit has in it is next to be treated of; who was not a mere bystander, spectator, and witness of this solemn transaction, compact, and agreement, between the Father and the Son, but was a party concerned in it. And,

1. First, The third person, the Spirit, gave his approbation of, and assent unto every article in the covenant.

1a. In general, what respected the salvation of the chosen ones; for that is the grand and principal article

of the covenant; "this", says David, speaking of the covenant, "is all my salvation", (2 Sam. 23:5) that is, the whole of his salvation; all things relative to it were provided for in it, and secured by it; in the economy of which each Person took his part; and that of the Spirit is Sanctification; which makes meet for the enjoyment of complete and eternal salvation; hence called "the sanctification of the Spirit" (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2). And this clearly shows, that the Spirit approved of, and assented to the whole scheme of salvation, or of the thing itself in general; or otherwise he would never have taken a part in it; and as it was the purpose and will of God the Father to save men by his Son, and he appointed them to obtain salvation by him; so the Son of God came to seek and save men, being sent of God for that purpose in which mission of him the Spirit joined; "Now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me", (Isa. 48:16) which is a plain proof that he approved of and assented to it, that the Son of God should be the Saviour of men; and whereas it was proper that the Son of God should assume human nature, and in it work out the salvation of men; and which was agreed upon between the Father and the Son; so it was approved of and assented to by the Spirit; as appears from his concern in the incarnation of Christ; for what was "conceived in the Virgin was of the Holy Ghost", (Matthew 1:18, 20) and, seeing it was necessary that the Saviour of men should suffer and die for them, to satisfy law and justice; and the divine Father enjoined his Son to lay down his life for them; to which command he became obedient; so the Spirit declared his approbation of it, by testifying beforehand, in the prophets, "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"; as well as was assisting to the human nature of Christ, in the sacrifice of himself; since it was "through the eternal Spirit", he offered up himself without spot to God (1 Peter 1:11; Heb 9:14). Once more, as it was highly proper, that as Christ should be delivered to death for the offences of men, so that he should rise again for their justification; or otherwise, the whole affair of salvation would have miscarried; hence the Father in covenant enjoined his Son, as to lay down his life, so to take it up again; and which he did, and in which the Spirit was concerned; and which showed his approbation of this closing part of the scheme of salvation by Christ (see Rom. 1:4).

1b. The Spirit of God approved of and assented to all the promises in the covenant: there are many exceeding great and precious promises in the Scriptures, which are transcribed from the covenant, and are all Yea and Amen in Christ, and in which the Spirit has a concern;

hence he is called “the Holy Spirit of promise”, (Eph. 1:13) indeed, he himself is the great promise of the covenant; promised both to Christ the Head, and to his members, (Matthew 12:18; Isa. 42:1, 44:3; Gal. 3:14) and he is concerned in the application of every promise to the elect; it is he that remembers to them the word of promise, on which the Lord has sometimes caused them to hope; and it is he that opens the promise to them, instructs them in it, and shows them what is contained in it, the nature, use, and suitableness of it; it is he that applies the promises to them at a proper season, when they are like apples of gold in pictures of silver; and he it is that keeps up their faith and hope, as to the grand promise of eternal life; so that they, “through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith”, (John 14:26; Prov. 25:11; Gal. 5:5) by which it appears, that he approved of every promise of the covenant made in eternity, or he would never act the part he does, in the application of them in time.

1c. The blessed Spirit approved of and gave his assent to all the grants made to Christ, and to his people in the covenant, to the sure mercies of David, to the spiritual blessings wherewith the elect are blessed in heavenly places in Christ; for he takes of these in time, and shows them to the persons interested in them, and their interest therein, (John 16:14) which he would not do, if he had not approved of the grants of these blessings to them, in the everlasting covenant; as for instance, the blessing of a justifying righteousness, to be wrought out by Christ, was provided in the covenant; and which being brought in, is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith: and besides the external revelation of it in the gospel, the Spirit of God brings near this righteousness, and sets it in the view of an awakened sinner, and shows him its suitableness, fulness, and excellency, works faith in him to receive it, and pronounces in his conscience his justification by it; hence it is said of such, that they are “justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11). Pardon of sin is another blessing of the covenant through Christ, and the Spirit takes the blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, shed for the remission of sin, and sprinkles it on the conscience, and thereby speaks peace and pardon to it; saying, Son, or “daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee” (Heb 8:12, 10:22, 12:24). Adoption also, a blessing of grace, provided in the covenant, and which the Spirit bears witness to and makes application of, and is sent down into the hearts of the covenant and adopted ones for that purpose, and is hence called “the Spirit of adoption”, (2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15, 16).

In short, all the grace given to the elect in Christ, before the world began, all the things that are freely given them of God in the covenant, the Spirit in time makes known unto them, and declares and testifies their interests in them, (1 Cor. 1:12, 2:9-11). All which abundantly prove his approbation of and assent unto everything contained in the covenant of grace.

2. Secondly, There are many things which the Holy Spirit himself undertook and engaged in covenant to do; and nothing more strongly proves this than his doing them; for had he not agreed to do them, they would not have been done by him. And,

a. First, Some things he has done, as he agreed to do, with respect to Christ; he formed the human nature of Christ, in which he obeyed and suffered for the salvation of the elect: every individual of human nature is, indeed, made by him; “The Spirit of God hath made me”, says Elihu, (Job 33:4) but the individual of Christ’s human nature, was “fearfully and wonderfully made” by him, as David, representing him, says he was “in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth”, in the womb of the Virgin, according to the model of it, in the book of God’s purposes and decrees; it was produced by the power of the Highest, the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, without the instrumentality of man; and so was free from the pollution of sin, propagated by ordinary and natural generation, and therefore called the holy thing, born of the Virgin (Ps. 139:14-16; Luke 1:35). The Spirit of God filled the same human nature with his gifts and graces without measure, which are the oil of gladness he anointed him with above his fellows, and thereby fitted and qualified him as man, for the discharge of his office as Mediator, (Isa. 11:1-3, 42:1, 61:1) he descended upon him as a dove at his baptism; which was the signal by which John the Baptist knew he was the Messiah, and pointed him out as such to others; he assisted him as man, in the ministry of the gospel, whereby he spake as never man did, and with an authority the Scribes and Pharisees did not; and in the performance of miracles; for he cast out devils, as he himself says, by “the Spirit of God” (Matthew 12:28). He also was concerned in Christ’s offering up himself a Sacrifice; and in his resurrection from the dead, as before observed; whereby he glorified him, as well as by other things, Christ said he would (John 16:14). All which he did according to covenant agreements and settlements.

b. Secondly, There are other things he has done, as he agreed to do, with respect to men; either,

1. To such as are in a public office and capacity, as

the prophets of the Old Testament; whom he inspired to speak and write as they did, (2 Peter 1:21) and the apostles of the New, who were endowed with power from on high, with his extraordinary gifts to preach the gospel, in all languages, to all people, and to confirm it with miracles, (Acts 1:4, 5, 2:4; Heb 2:3, 4) and ordinary ministers of the word, in all succeeding generations, with gifts and grace suitable to their office; whom he calls and separates to it, directs where they should go, he has work for them to do, and makes them overseers of flocks or churches committed to their care, (Acts 13:2, 16:6, 7, 20:28) and it is he that makes the word preached by them effectual to the conviction and conversion of sinners, and to the comfort and edification of saints; and whereby he conveys himself into the hearts of men (1 Thess. 1:5, 6; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8; Gal. 3:2). All which he undertook to do, and has done. Or,

2. To such as are in a private capacity, to whom he is,

a. A Spirit “of conviction”; he convinces them of sin, original, actual, of all their sins of thought, word, and deed; of the demerit of sin, and of the inability of men to make atonement for it; and brings them to such a sense of it, as to loath it, and themselves for it; to blush and be ashamed of it, and to have such a godly sorrow for it, which works repentance unto salvation. And “of righteousness”; of the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; and of the excellency and suitableness of the righteousness of Christ. And “of judgment”; that there is one not to be escaped, and at which all must appear, and in which there will be no standing, but in the righteousness of Christ (John 16:8).

b. A Spirit “of regeneration” and “renovation”; men must be born again, and they that are born of God, even of the Spirit of God, are renewed by him in the Spirit of their minds; all things are made new; a new man is created in them, a new heart and a new spirit are given unto them, according to the covenant of grace; hence we read of “regeneration”, and “the renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5).

c. A Spirit “of faith”; all men have not faith, only God’s elect; and therefore true faith is called the faith of God’s elect; and those that have it, have it not of themselves, it is the gift of God; it is of the operation of God, a work of his almighty power, begun, carried on, and performed with power, and that by the Holy Ghost: and therefore he is called “the Spirit of faith” (2 Cor. 4:13).

d. A “Comforter”, under which character he is often spoken of, and promised by Christ, that he should be sent by him, and from his Father, according to covenant

agreements; and which office, as he freely undertook in covenant, he performs, by shedding abroad the love of God and Christ in the hearts of his people; by leading into the comfortable doctrines of the gospel; by opening and applying the precious promises of it; by taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to them; and by witnessing to them their adoption; and by being the earnest of their inheritance, and the sealer of them up unto the day of redemption.

e. A Sanctifier; if any are sanctified, it is by the Spirit of God; sanctification is his work, and therefore called “the sanctification of the Spirit”, as before observed: it is the Spirit that begins, and carries on, and finishes the work of grace and holiness upon the hearts of God’s elect, without which no man shall see the Lord. He is the Spirit of strength to the saints, to enable them to exercise grace, and to perform duties he is put into them according to the covenant of grace, to cause them to walk in the statutes and judgments of the Lord to do them; to strengthen them to walk on in the ways of the Lord, and to persevere in faith and holiness to the end. And all this the Spirit of God does, as he engaged and undertook to do, in the everlasting covenant; and therefore he is said to “come”, being sent, to do these things; not without his will and consent, but according to his voluntary engagements in covenant, without which he could not be sent by the Father and the Son, being equal to them; and this will account for the several passages where he is said to be sent by the Father, in the name of Christ, and by Christ, from the Father (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7; Gal. 4:6). This being all agreed on, and settled in the covenant between them.

Chapter 15

OF THE PROPERTIES OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE

I shall close the account of the covenant of Grace with the epithets or properties of it; which may serve to lead more fully and clearly into the nature, use, and excellency of it; and which may in some measure be collected from what has been already observed. And,

1. It is an “eternal” covenant; not merely as to duration, being what will continue to eternity, and so is called an everlasting covenant, but as to the original of it; it was made in eternity, and commenced and bears date from eternity. The spring of it is the mercy, grace, and love of God; “I said”, says God, “mercy shall be built up for ever”; there shall be such a display of it, as shall always abide; and in order to this it follows; “I have made a covenant with my chosen”, with Christ,

and the elect in him; which is a standing everlasting monument of mercy; and now “the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting”; not only as an attribute of God, but in the display of it to sinful miserable creatures; and where is there a display of it so early but in the covenant? (Ps. 89:2, 3, 28, 103:17) and which mercy is no other than the love and free favour of God exercising itself in such a manner towards sinful men; and which love, as it was bore to Christ, so to his people in him, before the foundation of the world (John 17:23, 24). The basis of the covenant, is God’s election of men to eternal life; the foundation of God, which stands sure, and which laid a foundation for the covenant of grace; it is built upon it; the covenant is made with Christ, God’s elect, and with men chosen in him, and who were chosen in him to be holy and happy, before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). The council of peace, which was introductory to the covenant of grace, was of old, from everlasting; as all the counsels of God are; in this Christ was the everlasting Counsellor; as well as in the covenant the everlasting Father: God was in Christ from eternity, forming the scheme of man’s peace, reconciliation, and salvation; which prepared and furnished sufficient matter for the everlasting covenant: Christ was set up as the Mediator of it “from everlasting”; from the beginning, or ever the earth was; his goings forth in it, in acts of love and grace towards his people, “were of old, from everlasting”; drawing nigh to his divine Father, and becoming their Surety, interposing between him and them as Mediator, engaging to do everything for them law and justice could require; and receiving on their account, all grants and promises made unto them, (Prov. 8:23; Mic. 5:2). The blessings of the covenant were put into the hands of Christ so early, and the elect were blessed with them in him, as they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, and are the “grace” given to them in him, “before the world began” (Eph. 1:3, 4; 2 Tim. 1:9). There were also promises made, particularly the grand promise of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world was; and which promise of life is in Christ, as all the promises of the covenant are, being put into his hands so early; the heirs of them not having an actual being, yet a representative one in him their Head (Titus 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:1). Now all this, proves the antiquity of the covenant of grace; nor is it any objection to it, that it is sometimes called the “second” and “new” covenant, (Heb. 8:7, 8, 13, 9:15, 12:24) for it is so called, not with respect to the covenant of works made with Adam, as if it was the second to that, and newer and later than that; for it was made long before that, even in

eternity, as has been shown; but the distinctions of “first” and “second”, “old” and “new”, respect the different administrations of the same covenant of grace in time: the first administration of it began immediately after the fall of Adam, and continued under the patriarchs, and under the Mosaical dispensation, unto the coming of Christ; and then a new administration of it took place, which made the first old, and is called the second, with respect to that; and yet both, for substance, are the same covenant, made in eternity, but variously administered in time. There are several time covenants made with men; as with Adam, Noah, Abraham, the children of Israel, Phinehas, David, &c. But the covenant made with Christ, and the elect in him, was not made in time, but in eternity. It is a notion that commonly obtains, that God makes a covenant of grace with men when they believe, repent, &c. But it is no such thing; the covenant of grace does not then begin to be made, only to be made manifest; it then openly takes place, its blessings are bestowed, its promises applied, its grace is wrought in the hearts of men, when God puts his fear there, gives a new heart, and a new spirit, and puts his own Spirit there, to work faith, repentance, and every other grace; but then the covenant is not new made, but all this is done in virtue and in consequence of the covenant of grace made in eternity, and according to the tenor of that.

2. The covenant of grace is entirely free, it is altogether of free grace; grace is the moving cause of it; God was not induced to make it from any motive and condition in men. Each of the parties entered freely into it; the Father, of his own grace and good will to men, proposed the terms of the covenant to his Son; and the Son of God, from his great love he bore to the same persons, voluntarily agreed unto them; and the same love in the blessed Spirit, engaged him to undertake what he did in it; hence we read, as of the love of the Father, and of the love of the Son, so of the love of the Spirit, (Rom. 15:30) which love of the three divine Persons, no where more clearly and fully appears, than in the covenant of grace, and the performance of it. The act of election, which is the basis of the covenant on which it proceeds, and to which it is commensurate, is entirely of grace, and not of works, and therefore called “the election of grace”, (Rom. 11:5, 6) the matter, sum and substance of the covenant is of grace; the blessings of it are all of grace, they all go by the name of “grace”, given in Christ before the world began (2 Tim. 1:9). Adoption is owing to the free favour of God; a justifying righteousness is the gift of his grace; pardon of sin is according to the riches of

his grace; and so every other blessing. The promises of it, which are exceeding great and precious, flow from the grace of God: when promises are made, the faithfulness of God is engaged to fulfil them; but it is of his grace and good will that he makes them; he is not obliged to make promise of any thing to his creatures. The grace of God greatly appears in making faith the recipient of all blessings and promises; which itself is not of men, but is the gift of God; and by divine wisdom is put in the place it is, to receive all the blessings and promises of the covenant; "That it might be by grace"; that it might appear that all is of grace; "to the end the promise", and so every blessing, "might be sure to all the seed" (Rom. 4:16). The end of making the covenant is, the glory of the grace of God; as God has made all things for himself, for his own glory, in nature and providence; so all things in grace, and particularly the covenant of grace, is made and stored with all the blessings of it, to the glory of his grace, (Eph. 1:3-6) and therefore with great propriety may, on all accounts, be called the covenant of grace.

3. This covenant is absolute and "unconditional": the covenant of works is conditional: Adam, according to it, was to continue in that happy state in which he was created and put, while he obeyed the voice of God, and abstained from the forbidden fruit; but if he eat of that, he was to be stripped of his happiness, and die; the language of that covenant is, do this and live; if obedient to it, then blessing and life; but if disobedient, then cursing and death. The covenant God made with Abraham and his seed, concerning their having the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, was conditional; if willing and obedient, and so long as they behaved themselves well, according to the laws of God given them, they were to possess it, and enjoy the good things of it, (Isa. 1:19) but if otherwise, to be dispossessed of it; and accordingly, when they broke the laws of God, their neighbouring nations were let in upon them, and harassed and distressed them, or they were carried captive by them out of it; as, first by the Assyrians, then by the Chaldeans, and at last by the Romans; in which state they now are. But not such is the covenant of grace, that is without any conditions on the part of men. Some, indeed, make it to be a conditional covenant, and faith and repentance to be the conditions of it. But these are not conditions, but blessings of the covenant, and are as absolutely promised in it, as anything else; the promise of a "new heart", and of a "new spirit", includes the gift of faith, and every other grace; and that of taking away the "stony heart", and giving an "heart of flesh", is fully expressive of the gift of the grace of repentance, (Ezek.

36:26). Besides, if these were conditions of the covenant, to be performed by men in their own strength, in order to be admitted into it, and receive the benefits of it; they would be as hard, and as difficult to be performed, as the condition of the covenant of works, perfect obedience; since faith requires, to the production of it, almighty power, even such as was put forth in raising Christ from the dead, (Eph. 1:19, 20) and though God may give men means, and time, and space of repentance, yet if he does not give them grace to repent, they never will. Christ's work, and the Spirit's grace, supersede all conditions in the covenant, respecting men; since they provide for everything that can be thought of, that is required or is wanting: Christ's work of redemption, atonement, and satisfaction for sin, as has been observed, is the only condition of the covenant; and that lies on the Mediator and Surety of the covenant, and not on the persons for whose sake it is made; "When thou shalt make his soul", or, "if his soul shall make an offering for sin", (Isa. 53:10) then such and such things are promised in the covenant, both to him and to his seed. Otherwise, the promises to them are absolute and unconditional, and run in this strain, I "will", and they "shall", without any "ifs" or conditions; as, I "will" be their God, and they "shall" be my people; I "will" put my law in their hearts; I "will" forgive their iniquities; they "shall" all know me, from the least to the greatest; I "will" put my fear in their hearts, that they "shall" not depart from me; I "will" sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye "shall" be clean; I "will" give you a new heart, and a new spirit, and an heart of flesh; and I "will" take away the stony heart, and I "will" put my Spirit within you, and "cause" you to walk in my statutes, and ye "shall" keep my judgments, and do them, (Jer. 31:33, 34, 32:38, 40; Ezek. 36:25-27). The blessings of the covenant are not suspended on any conditions to be performed; they do not wait for any, but take place without them. Redemption by Christ, the great article of the covenant, was not deferred on account of any condition to be performed by men; but Christ, in the fulness of time agreed on in covenant, when men were without strength to do anything, died for the ungodly; while they were yet sinners Christ died for them; and when enemies, they were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; and herein appeared the love of God; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (Rom. 5:6, 8, 10; 1 John 4:10). Adoption takes place among men, who were not the people of God; and justification has for its objects the ungodly; and God forgives the iniquities of men, and remembers them no

more, though they have done nothing to deserve it, but are guilty of the greatest ingratitude and unkindness; and regeneration finds men dead in trespasses and sins, foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, without any previous dispositions or preparations in them for it (Hosea 1:10; Rom. 4:5; Isa. 43:25; Eph. 2:4, 5). 4. The covenant of grace is “perfect” and complete, wanting nothing; it is “ordered in all things”; and if in all things, nothing can be wanting in it, (2 Sam. 23:5). It is full of precious promises; promises of all sorts, promises of things temporal, spiritual, and eternal; so that there is nothing that a believer stands in need of, nor any state nor condition he can come into, but there is a promise of what he wants, and which is suitable to him, (1 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 13:5, 6) it is full of rich blessings of grace; of all spiritual blessings, of blessings of goodness, which Christ, as Mediator, is made most blessed with; of goodness inconceivable and inexpressible, laid up in the covenant, and in the hands of Christ, for the covenant ones: it provides all things pertaining to life and godliness; for the implantation of life itself, and of every grace; for the beginning, carrying on, and finishing the work of grace on the heart; for the food, nourishment, support, and maintenance of the spiritual life in it; for the peace, joy, and comfort of believers; for grace, and spiritual strength to exercise grace, perform duties, bear and suffer all that they are called unto; for their perseverance in faith and holiness to the end; and for their eternal life and happiness; grace and glory are secured in this covenant; even “all salvation”, the whole of it, and all the parts of it (2 Sam. 23:5). And it is so ordered, as to secure the spiritual and eternal welfare of God’s elect, so to advance the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father is glorified in and by Christ the Mediator of it; and Christ is glorified by the Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to his people; and the Spirit is glorified by being the earnest, pledge, and seal of the heavenly inheritance (Isa. 49:3; John 16:14; Eph. 1:14). 5. It is an “holy” covenant; so it is called, (Luke 1:72) where God, by visiting and redeeming his people, and raising up an horn of salvation for them, or by sending Christ to be the Redeemer and Saviour of them, and to be his salvation to them, which is the grand article of the covenant of grace, is said by all this, “to remember his holy covenant”. The contracting parties in this covenant are, the holy Father, and the holy Son, and the holy Spirit, with respect to whom this epithet is thrice expressed in (Isa. 6:3; Ps. 111:9) the matter of it is holy; the promises of it are holy, (Ps. 105:42) the blessings of it are holy; what

are called the mercies of David, (Isa. 55:3) are called &, the “holy” things of David, in (Acts 13:34) and nothing can more strongly engage to a concern for holiness of heart and life, than the promises of the covenant; (see 2 Cor. 6:18, 7:1) yea, the covenant provides fully for the sanctification of all the covenant ones; expressed by writing the laws of God in the hearts of them, putting his fear into them, giving them new hearts and new spirits, taking away the stony heart from them, and putting his own Spirit within them, to enable them to walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them (Jer. 31:33, 32:39, 40; Ezek. 36:26, 27). 6. It is a sure covenant, firm and immovable, more immovable than rocks and mountains; they may depart, but this covenant shall never depart, (2 Sam. 23:5; Isa. 54:10) it is “kept”, or “observed”, as the word rendered “sure”, in the first of those places, signifies; it is kept inviolably by God that made it; hence he is sometimes described as a God “keeping covenant”, (Neh. 9:32) his faithfulness, which he will never suffer to fail, is engaged to keep it, and therefore it is he will not break it, and men cannot, (Ps. 89:33, 34) it is secured by the oath of God, and the immutability of that; for as the counsel of God is confirmed by his oath, so is the covenant of God; for it follows in the place now referred to (Ps. 89:35). “Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David”. And that is another reason why the covenant will not be broken; and why the word or promise that is gone out of his mouth shall not be altered. The covenant is also ratified and confirmed by the death of Christ, the Testator, as has been shown in a former chapter; whence the blood of Christ is called the blood of the covenant, which has sealed and confirmed it. The promises of the covenant are Yea and Amen in Christ; that is, sure and firm; and the blessings of it are the sure mercies of David, and the whole of it is confirmed in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20; Isa. 54:3; Gal. 3:17). 7. It is frequently called an “everlasting” covenant (2 Sam. 23:5; Isa. 54:3; Heb. 13:20). It is a covenant that will stand fast with Christ for ever, with whom it is made, and is what God has commanded for ever, and will be always fulfilling; the effects of it will be always seen and enjoyed, in time and to all eternity, (Ps. 89:28, 111:9). It is a covenant that will never be antiquated, nor give way to, nor be succeeded by another; the covenant of works is broken, and has been succeeded by an administration of the covenant of grace; and that first administration being not faultless, but deficient with respect to clearness and extensiveness, is waxen old, and vanished away, and has given place to a new administration of it; which will continue unto the

end of the world, until all the covenant ones are gathered in: but though these two administrations differ in some things, as to some external circumstances and ordinances; yet the matter, sum, and substance of them is the same, even Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever: he is the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of Old and New Testament saints, who all partake of the same spiritual benefits and blessings, and of the same promises; and both are saved in the same way, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; even by the grace of the covenant, which is invariable and perpetual.

Chapter 16

OF THE COMPLACENCY AND DELIGHT GOD HAD IN HIMSELF, AND THE DIVINE PERSONS IN EACH OTHER, BEFORE ANY CREATURE WAS BROUGHT INTO BEING

Having finished what I had to say concerning the internal acts of God, and the eternal transactions between the three divine Persons, before any creature, angel or man, was made; I should now have entered upon the external acts and works of God in time, but that I thought it might be proper, first, to observe the complacency, delight, and satisfaction God had in himself, in his own nature and perfections, before any creature existed; and would have had, if none had ever been brought into being: as also the pleasure he took in the fore views of his eternal purposes and decrees being executed in time; and of the success of those transactions, which were between the divine Persons in God, in the council of peace, and covenant of grace; and especially the mutual delight and complacency each divine Person had in one another, when alone, in a boundless eternity, and all of them had in the chosen vessels of salvation.

1. First, The complacency, delight, and satisfaction, which the divine Being had in himself, in his own nature and perfections, before the existence of any creature; and would have had the same if no creature had ever existed: in his nature, in the contemplation of the unspeakable glories of Deity, and in the special properties and mutual relations of the three persons to each other, and in the perfections of his nature. God is a most perfect being, entire and wanting nothing; he is El-shaddai, God all-sufficient, who has a sufficiency in and of himself, and needs nothing from creatures; he is the blessed one, God blessed for evermore; completely happy in himself, as has been proved, when his perfections were considered; whatever perfection or excellency is in creatures, angels or men, it is all from him, and is in him to the highest

degree, and therefore as in them can add nothing to his pleasure and happiness: the perfections of God are indeed displayed in the creatures in a glorious manner; the heavens declare his glory, and the earth is full of it; but then these displays are made not for his own sake, but for the sake of others, that they may understand his eternal power and Godhead, or be left without excuse; and though his perfections are very brightly displayed herein, yet they are clearer in himself, and so can give him no new pleasure and satisfaction, nor add anything to his felicity and blessedness; for though it is said, "For thy pleasure they are and were created"; (Rev. 4:11) "pleasure" there does not signify delight but will; and so it should be rendered by thy will, or according to it, "they are and were created"; and though when they were made, and he had reviewed them, they appeared to him all very good, and he expressed his well pleasedness in them; yet this raised no new joy in him, nor added anything to his happiness, complete in himself; which would have been the same if a creature, or any of the works of creation had never been made, nor if any of the sons of men had ever been redeemed; for the benefit arising from the redemption of men by Christ, and the satisfaction made for them by him, redounds not to God, but to the redeemed, and for whom the satisfaction is made; "My goodness extendeth not to thee", says Christ, "but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight"; (Ps. 16:2, 3) nor does he need the worship and obedience of angels or men; nor does he receive any additional pleasure and happiness from them; what are the highest and loudest praises of angels, to him who is exalted above all blessing and praise? Or the prayers and petitions of indigent creatures? The benefit from them is to them, and not to him; what is all the righteousness, and what are the best works done by men to him? "Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? Or what receiveth he of thine hand? Can a man by all this be profitable to God?" No, he cannot; when the best of men have done all they can, they must own they are but "unprofitable servants", with respect to him. "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again; for of him, and through him, and to him are all things?" (Job 22:2, 3, 35:7; Luke 17:10; Rom. 11:35, 36). Since then nothing in time, in and from creatures, add anything to the essential glory, bliss, and happiness of the divine Being; it clearly appears, that his going forth in the works of creation, did not arise from necessity of nature, but was

according to his sovereign will; and that he had infinite delight, pleasure, and complacency in himself, before any creature was made, and would have had the same, if they had never been.

2. Secondly, As Jehovah took delight and pleasure in himself, in his own nature, and the perfections of it, so in the internal and eternal acts of his mind; his purposes and decrees, formed in his eternal mind, according to the good pleasure of his will; these concern all things done in time, from the beginning to the end of the world; the formation of the heaven, earth, and sea, and all that are in them; everything that has been, is, or shall be, since the world began to the consummation of all things; for there is a purpose for everything under heaven, and a time for every purpose (Eccl. 3:1). And these all lay before God, at once and together, in his all-comprehending mind; he saw the end from the beginning, and every intervening thing; "Known unto God are all his works from eternity", (Acts 15:18) and he delighted in them, as he saw them in himself, in his mind and will, and in the fore views of the accomplishment of them in time; who calls things that are not, as though they were; they stood all before him in his view, as if really in execution; nor does the execution of them add any new joy and pleasure to him: particularly all those purposes and resolutions of his mind, concerning the redemption, conversion, and salvation of his chosen ones, and the state and condition of his church, in all the periods of time, were viewed within himself, with the utmost delight and pleasure; the plan of their peace and reconciliation, drawn in the council of peace, and everything respecting their salvation, settled in the covenant of grace. These transactions gave him infinite pleasure and satisfaction; and on these his thoughts have ran ever since, with the utmost delight, in the fore views of all things, taking place in time and to eternity, according to these ancient settlements. But what I would chiefly attend unto is,

3. Thirdly, The delight and complacency which each divine Person had in one another, before any creature was in being; with respect to two of the divine Persons, this is strongly expressed in Proverbs 8:30. "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him": when all this was, may be learned from the preceding verses; when there were no depths, no fountains abounding with water; before the mountains were settled, while as yet he had not made the earth, &c. (Prov. 8:24-29) and the third Person is not to be excluded.

a. First, The delight and complacency of the Father in

the Son, is declared in the following expressions; which are borrowed from the delight and pleasure parents take in their children; being "by" them, "brought up" with them, "nursed" up by them, "playing" before them; which must be understood with a decency becoming the divine Persons, and not be strained beyond their general design, which is to express the mutual delight of the Father and the Son in each other: "Then I was by him", from eternity, or before the world was; I, a person, as the pronoun is expressive of; not a nature, not the human nature of Christ, which is no person; and still less a part of it, the soul of Christ, which then had no existence; but I, a divine Person, the eternal "Logos", the Word and Wisdom of God, who is all along speaking from Proverbs 8:12. "I Wisdom", &c. To this very passage, the same with the Word John speaks of, and much in the same language (John 1:1). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"; to which Word he ascribes the creation of all things, and therefore must be before thine, as well as be a divine Person; and he is in both places represented as a distinct Person, as he must be, from him, by whom, and with whom, he was a Person eternally existing; being not only before Abraham, but before Adam, or any creature was in being; a Person co-existing, as a Son with the Father, being co-essential and co-eternal with his Father; and was by him, and at his side, on a level with him; Jehovah's fellow, equal to him, possessed of the same perfections; and being by him, and in his presence, was infinitely delighted in by him; and was "as one brought up with him", as a Son with a Father, and so denotes his relation to him, being begotten of him, his own Son, the Son of the Father, in truth and love; and the Father's tender regard of him, and delight in him; being, as some render the word, "nursed up" by him, and carried in his bosom, as a nursing Father bears the sucking child; so to express the exceeding great tenderness of the Father to the Son, and his delight in him, the only begotten Son, he is said to be "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18.) Though the phrase may also have respect to Christ, in his mediatorial capacity, who was foreordained and constituted as Mediator by his Father, and trained up in his office, and to whom he pointed out the work he was to do as such; to bring Jacob again, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel; and be his salvation unto the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:5, 6). "And I was daily his delight"; day by day, or every day; not that there are, properly speaking, days in eternity; but the phrase is expressive of the constant and

invariable delight the Father had in his Son; as well as the greatness of it is signified by the word in the plural number, “delights”; he was his exceeding great delight, superlatively delightful to him; and so he was, as he was his Son, a Son of delights, the dear Son of his love; whom he loved before the foundation of the world, with a love of complacency and delight; he was always his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; partly because of his likeness to him, being the image of the invisible God, the express image of his Person; as every like loves its like; and partly because of the same nature with him, having the same perfections, even the whole fulness of the Godhead in him: he was also his delight, considered in his office as Mediator; “Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth” (Isa. 42:1). He delighted in him, as engaging in covenant to be the Mediator and Surety of it; as with admiration, so with the utmost pleasure and delight, he said, “Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?” (Jer. 30:21) to strike hands with me, and become a Surety for my people. And with equal pleasure did he behold him acceding and assenting to his proposals in covenant, saying, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God!” (Ps. 40:7, 8). He delighted in him as the God-man; being fit, as such, for the work he assigned unto him; and whereas he proposed to him in covenant, to assume human nature in time, for that purpose, and he agreed unto it, he viewed him henceforward as the God-man; and he bore the repute of it with him, and considered him under this character; he delighted in the fore views of his future assumption of human nature; and a little before the time, by Zechariah, one of the last of the prophets, expressed his joy at the near approach of it; “Behold, I will bring forth my Servant, the Branch”; that is, speedily, in a very short time; and again, “Behold the Man, whose name is the Branch, he shall grow up out of his place”, (Zech. 3:8, 6:12) which is signified to be future, yet near. And he delighted in the fore views of that obedience to his will his Son should yield in that nature, by which the law would be magnified and made honourable; and of his sufferings and death in it, whereby full satisfaction would be given for the sins of his people; and of his glorification at his right hand in that nature he had promised him; and of his own glory displayed in the salvation of men by him, and a full accomplishment of that; an affair his heart was so much set upon from everlasting. In the fore views of all this was Christ as Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour, as well as God’s own Son, the object of his infinite delight and pleasure from everlasting.

b. Secondly, The Son of God also had the same delight and pleasure in his divine Father, before the world was; and when there was no creature in being, he was then “rejoicing always before him”; rejoicing in being possessed of the same nature and perfections his Father was, being like and equal to him in all things; and rejoicing that he stood in such a relation to him as a Son to a Father; with what exultation does he repeat the words of his Father to him, declaring this relation; “The Lord hath said unto me”, and that was in eternity, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee” (Ps. 2:7). He delighted in the fore views of his future incarnation, as being agreeable to his Father’s will; “A body hast thou prepared me”, (Heb. 10:5) which he spoke with pleasure, and as being willing and desirous to assume it; in which he should do his Father’s will and work, and which would be his meat and drink, and accomplish the salvation of his people, which was the “joy set before him”; and he rejoiced in the fore views of his Father being glorified by it, and of his own glory upon it (John 13:31, 32, 17:1, 4, 5).

c. Thirdly, Though the third Person, the Holy Spirit, is not mentioned in the passage in Proverbs; yet as the Father delights in the Son, and the Son in the Father, so both of them delight in the Spirit, as proceeding from them, and he in them; for these Three are One, of the same nature and perfections, and have a mutual in being in each other, and so a complacency in one another; for as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, (John 10:38, 14:10) so the Spirit is in them, and they in him; and in consequence must have a mutual delight in each other: the Spirit, as he is of the same nature with the Father and the Son, always took infinite delight in his own nature and perfections; and as he was privy to all the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of God, which are the deep things he searches and reveals; he must have taken pleasure in them, and in the fore views of the execution of them; and as he approved and assented to all the articles in the council and covenant of peace, he must have had infinite delight in the view of the accomplishment of them, as well as of those things which he himself in covenant undertook to perform.

d. Fourthly, This mutual delight and complacency which each Person had in one another, lay in and arose from the perfect knowledge they had of each other; “As the Father knoweth me”, says Christ, “so know I the Father”, (John 10:15) and the Spirit knows them both, and the things that are in them, (1 Cor. 2:10, 11) and hence arises mutual love to each other; the Father loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father, (John 3:35, 5:20,

14:31) and the Spirit proceeding from them both, loves them both; and it cannot be otherwise, since there is such a nearness to, and mutual in being in each other. Moreover, 4. Fourthly, The three divine Persons had from eternity, and before any creature was in actual being, the utmost delight and complacency in the elect of God, and in the fore views of their salvation and happiness. The joy and delight of the Son in them are strongly expressed in Proverbs 8:31. "Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men"; that is, from everlasting; before ever the earth was made, or any creature in it; then was the Son of God "rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth"; in the fore views of those spots of ground, houses, and cottages, where it was known the chosen vessels of mercy would dwell: for God has "determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation"; and Christ knew beforehand in what places he should have a people, and in which this and that man should be born again, (Acts 17:26, 18:10; Ps. 87:4-6) and as lovers express their love to the objects of their love, by saying they love the ground on which they tread; so Christ having loved his people with a love of complacency and delight, rejoiced in the foresight of those parts of the habitable world, where he saw their habitations would be: the church of God on earth may be called the habitable part of his earth, being the dwelling place which he has chosen for himself as such, and where he delights to dwell, and they were from everlasting his Hephzibah and Beulah. Some respect may be had to the new earth, or the second Adam's earth; in which only righteous persons will dwell; and where the tabernacle of God will be with men, his chosen ones; and where he will dwell with them a thousand years; and in this also the Son of God was rejoicing in the fore views of: nor am I averse to take in the human nature of Christ, into the sense of the words; who though with respect to his divine Person, and mediatorial office, is the Lord from heaven; yet, as to his human nature, he was "curiously wrought", by the power and skill of the Holy Ghost, "in the lowest parts of the earth", in the womb of the Virgin, and therefore called "the fruit of the earth", being born of an earthly woman, (Ps. 139:15; Isa. 4:2) and which human nature is a tabernacle God pitched, and not men; a tabernacle for the eternal Word to dwell in, and where the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily; and in the views of this the Son of God was rejoicing before the world was; and in time expressed his desire of it, and delight in it, before it became his habitation; as may be concluded from his frequent appearances in an

human form, before his incarnation, as forshadowing it; as to Adam, Abraham, Jacob, and other patriarchs; he rejoiced in the fore views of it, as it would be of the same kind with that of the children given him, and he had undertook to redeem and save; and as it would be the produce of the holy Spirit, and so free from sin; and as it would be filled and adorned with his gifts and graces; and as after he had done the will of God in it, it would be crowned with glory and honour, and set down at the right hand of God: and all this joy and delight were with a peculiar respect unto the elect of God, as follows; "And my delights were with the sons of men", the posterity of Adam, fallen creatures, the chosen of God among them, who sinned in him, and on whom judgment came unto condemnation, and who are conceived and born in sin, and are by nature children of wrath as others; and yet the delights of Christ, his exceeding great delight, expressed by the plural number, were with them as they were loved by his Father, chosen in him, and given to him; and as he viewed them redeemed by him, washed in his blood, and clothed with his righteousness; and as he saw them in the glass of his Father's purposes and decrees, in all the glory he designed to bring them to, even to be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Now not only the Son of God took delight and complacency in the elect of God, before the world was; but the Father and Spirit also; for God the Father of Christ loved them, and chose them in him, before the foundation of the world, (2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 1:4). And this love was a love of complacency and delight; because he delighted in them, therefore he chose them to be his peculiar people, as he did Israel of old, in a national sense (Deut. 10:15). And from the same delight in them arose the council held by him with the other two Persons concerning them; and the covenant of grace he entered into with them. And so the Holy Spirit, his delights were with the same Persons, as they were chosen in Christ, through sanctification by him; and in the fore views of their being temples for him to dwell in; and in whom he should abide as the earnest and pledge of their future glory; and as the sealer of them to the day of redemption; and as they should be sanctified and made meet by him for eternal glory and happiness. Thus we see what delight and complacency, satisfaction and happiness, God had in himself before any creature existed; and would have continued the same, if none had ever been created: so that he needed not for his own sake, to go forth in acts of power, to bring creatures into being, since he would have been as happy without them as with them; wherefore the production of them

into being is purely the effect of his sovereign will and pleasure; and we see what the thoughts of God were employed about, and chiefly concerned in, in eternity; and the whole furnishes an answer to those curious questions, if it is proper to make them; What was God doing in eternity? What did his thoughts chiefly run upon then? And wherein lay his satisfaction, delight, and happiness?